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ABSTRACT

In focusing on recursive writing, the nine articles in this journal issue suggest that student writing should be taken seriously. The first article states that revision should occur throughout the writing process while the second discusses how to invite writers to become active readers of their own texts. The third article presents methods of modeling revision for students and helping them resee and rework their own writing; the fourth discusses one way of reconciling revision and the student-teacher writing conference with the realities of high enrollment; and the fifth article suggests that teaching rhetorical character promotes student writing that demonstrates correct rhetorical forms. The sixth article describes a case study of revision in a cooperative writing workshop and the seventh presents several revision strategies developed specifically for basic writers. The eighth article offers strategies that help students overcome psychological barriers to revision while the ninth article suggests that showing students how to hear what they write can help them understand the multidimensional writing process of which revision is a constant part. (MM)

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Revising

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Foreword

Paula Johnson's words, spoken at an Association of Departments of English seminar several years ago, still resound in my consciousness: "What might happen," she asked, "if we allowed ourselves to regard student writing as real writing. . . .What if we took that kind of writing seriously?" I had been a participant in the workshops which Donna Grout mentions in her essay in this journal, and, with Donna's help and example, had experienced a new birth as a teacher of writing. Professor Johnson's words stunned me into an awareness of what our student-centered, process-oriented teaching really meant: we were thinking of students' writing as real writing, taking it seriously. In so doing, we were changing both our lives and theirs.

If one thing can be said to hold true for all of the articles in this journal, it is that their writers, without a doubt, take students' writing seriously--and that they take seriously the teaching of writing. This attitude is the source of their common insistence upon recursive revising: they assume that their students really do have something to say. Such an attitude leads Karen Hodges to model for her students "a definition of writing as revising," William Pixton to work out a plan to include conferencing in the freshman writing program of a large state university, Janet Hiller to sublimate the teaching of rhetorical modes to the teaching of "rhetorical character," Nancy Walker to "alert" students to a "kind of mental hearing" as they revise, Carroll Viera to mount "a sensitive but unremitting assault" upon the misconceptions which keep students from doing more than superficial revising, Benjamin Glassner to teach revising through cooperative writing workshops, and Willa Wolcott to develop a series of strategies for helping basic writers "understand revision and function as better critics of their own work."

"What might happen," Paula Johnson asked, ". . .to our departments. . . to students. . .to teachers. . .to English. . .?" The editors of the MISSOURI ENGLISH BULLETIN believe that the nine articles in this, MEB's first journal issue, provide an impressive answer to those questions. Nowhere, perhaps, is that answer articulated more forcefully than in these words from Nicholas Coles:

> By responding to our students' writing as actively and respectfully as we do to our other reading, by behaving as readers of their writing the way we would like them to behave in it as writers, by enacting in our comments how we take what our students do seriously, we in effect empower them with our best to do theirs when they revise.

Linda Wyman

A Normal Constant

Donna M. Grout
Lincoln University

Once I used simply to tell students to revise their drafts into final products. The result: rewritten (literally) drafts on fresh sheets of paper with all or most weaknesses carefully preserved. Explanations with dittoed examples of how drafts become final products met with scant success. I took to demanding that drafts be given to me for comments before final products were attempted. Back went the "drafts" with written comments and errors indicated so that students could begin revising. Some students did do better this way, but most of those still needed to come to me to have me read outloud what I had already written on the papers. This wasn't a penmanship problem; these students could not or would not read the comments by themselves. They appeared to have a mental or psychological barrier to this type of written communication. As far as I could ascertain, the rest of my students never looked at the feedback--or were also unable to read it--and took no further step. At any rate, most of my students scrupulously avoided all my suggestions. Being still young in the trade, I thought the problem might be unique to me. I asked around only to discover that my peers had no particular solutions. I also found out that some did not share my distress. It was as though they too thought that fresh sheets of paper or the correction of spelling errors constituted revision. One person suggested that I give no more outside papers and then the problem would be solved through elimination.

Eventually I was able to recognize my approach to revision as one of the many symptoms of my lopsided approach to the teaching of composition. Yet my failure with teaching revision did prove to be a cornerstone in my professional struggle, and out of my observations, study, and multiple miserable experiences have come certain conclusions about revision and how it fits into the teaching of writing.

Revision will not make sense unless students are placed in a situation which calls for it in a natural fashion. This means a full writing process. I used to marvel at students writing outside papers minutes before they were due. I also watched them look bewildered when I would hand back a paper and give them a few days to revise. Upon further reflection, I decided that students were acting quite logically given the circumstances: my orations on revision were almost entirely connected to outside papers. When we had done one of those, we would have an in-class paper, most of which had to be completed in one class period. My students were getting contradictory messages, and they chose the message that seemed most consistent with their general experience. This was not hard for them to decide since some of my peers never even gave out-of-class papers and most of those who did let it be known that the in-class ones carried more weight. Students who wrote papers

on their way to class or who viewed revision as catching a punctuation error or copying over neatly what they had already written were abiding by the most constant message they had met in their schooling: a good writer is one who can write more than most in a semi-organized fashion with few errors in a neat manner within a strict time limit.

At least I think that is what I and other teachers were once teaching. It has never been clear to me what we were about, once I stopped to ask lots of questions about it. Writing is not a race for the fittest, fastest, and neatest. Who except students taking essay tests or writing in-class themes must ever write something good in 10, 30, or 50 minutes? What has the mph rate to do with skill, understanding, or expression? It certainly has nothing to do with revision.

Aside from eventually structuring my assignments to be as much process- as product-oriented, I worked on my own skill and credibility. I realized that when I did manage to get a student to slow down and try to work through a writing challenge, I did not often know how to help him much. "Think some more" was no longer a satisfactory response to his problem. Quite honestly, I had far too little feel for the terrain, and it struck me that perhaps English teachers were unique in this. The music teacher sang, the math teacher did problems on the board, the art teacher drew, etc. What did the English teacher do? Not write, certainly. I was writing less than ever since I had started teaching, and it was a rare peer who ever wrote more than I did. Where were my false starts, drafts, failures, and successes? Besides, my training, like that of most English teachers, had been in literature and not even in the teaching of that. I began to write and write and write.

My lack of knowledge about the writing process and the connections between that process and the teaching of writing was not limited to me. I had suspected as much, but I got confirmation of it sometime later when I started running workshops for teaching of writing. Some teachers admitted they had not written anything for years except comments on papers and an occasional committee report. Others refused to write for the very workshop in which they were supposed to share what they wrote with their peers. All of these non-writers were ready, nevertheless, to start responding to the writing done by other workshop members until I stopped them from doing so. After all, they had been judging the writing of others for years without any practice or risk of their own. It took some explaining to clarify the flaw in that system.

Teachers who did write for the workshops and who made process inventories in an attempt to study their own writing processes made some discoveries. Most had no idea how they themselves went about writing various kinds of things. Nor had they realized how distant was their writing practice from what they taught in the classroom. Most of the writing process they allowed or encouraged on the parts of their students was very truncated and usually quite standardized. The teachers may have all had big differences in how they went about doing a particular writing assignment, but they allowed for few differences among their students; a sentence outline was as likely to be required for a three-page paper as for a ten-page paper.

Upon engaging in peer response, the teachers in my workshops had all the normal problems of shyness and tension anybody else would have. They did have

one problem, though, that would not have been expected of English teachers--the inability to speak concretely about a piece of writing to help the writer see what he had accomplished already and what he yet had to do. Removed from the cushions of "frag," "awk," "too general," and their ilk, the participants were in trouble. Especially difficult for them was the problem of how to help a good writer get better; most of their teaching had been directed toward getting weak writers adequate. They did not know enough about language and about writing to be able to say other than very primary things: good writers were good and got A's. How various structures worked, what part rhythm played in establishing tone--these were not things they had ever worked with. They had not studied their own writing, and they had not studied their students' writing; they had merely marked it down.

From such dreary experiences and from my own writing, it became painfully clear to me why I had been having trouble teaching writing, especially revision. Armed with regular experience in writing and in exchanging feedback with writers on my level, I began to gain considerable credibility with my students. Revision, for example, was not just for writers who could not get it right the first time around; it was also for the English teacher. Writing was a process that anybody could get stuck in and usually did if he or she was engaged in other than the 50-minute-theme race. I now had personal experience and some specific suggestions for how to get out of the mire. I was also gaining in the ability to ask the right kinds of questions. At last I was far closer than I had ever been before to what is suggested in the "Position Statement on the Preparation and Professional Development of Teachers of Writing" (College Composition and Communication, Dec. 1982). This statement urges teachers and prospective teachers to read and respond to the writing of students, classmates, and colleagues,

> a. making supportive comments that express respect for others' ideas and feelings and encourage writers to use writing as a means to personal, academic, and professional growth
>
> b. asking probing questions that help writers see what they have not expressed clearly and convincingly and what they have not presented effectively. . . .

Such responses, whether written or oral, are far more difficult to make than general statements or indications of mechanical error. They demand self-risk, constant practice in writing, regular solicitation of feedback on one's writing, and careful analysis of various kinds of writing to see how they are put together even down to the smallest detail.

I came to the important conclusion that revision is something that does not happen at a certain time in the writing process. Revision is a normal constant. One might define writing as a process of revision on and off paper. Only proofreading has a clearly allocated moment in the revision process. The rest of the process begins the moment a writer starts to consider a possible topic on which to write. The selection of topic, narrowing of it enough to make a main point an approachable possibility, perhaps writing enough to discover what the main point and/or audience should be are all parts of a process of re-doing, re-thinking, reviewing, eliminating, and adding. One could use "Revision" as the heading for all such activities.

Deadlines of various sorts, either those imposed by others (a paper is due) or by the nature of the communication (the memo needs to be out by this afternoon) are frequently what bring the process just described to a halt rather than the magic of knowing, as Yeats did, that he had a poem in perfect shape when it would snap shut like a well-made wooden box. We all have our magic moments; such are among the rewards of writing. But mainly we struggle on toward a quality product in the hopes that we will get one before we have to put whatever we have out for consumption.

Once students can begin to regard revision as not only a normal constant but as a relatively open-ended one, the taboos connected with it fade, as does much of the confusion. Once students can feel comfortable with the fact that for a single assignment some students will have more revising to do than others and revision will take place in different places along the way for everyone, they can quit worrying about who is doing more or less of anything and concentrate on what as individual writers they need to get done for themselves. Once they realize that revision happens on paper and off it, by oneself, in conferences, in groups, and perhaps even while sleeping, revision becomes part of the expected flow of things rather than an activity one must engage in, ready or not, at the sound of the gong.

Naturally students will need time to ease into revision as the major activity in the writing process. Yet given writing assignments which require a full process, a teacher experienced in writing in a regular and concrete way, and the concept of revision presented as a normal constant, students begin to respond. At least most of a class has a clear notion that some kinds of changes are supposed to take place as a matter of course when one is meeting a writing challenge. Eventually students will expect such changes to take place. I made sure last term that the final exam, a paper, for my comp class was started several days before the two hours scheduled for that exam. Nonetheless, my students--now accustomed to a long process of revision--engaged in mutterings about "university policies" and "final exam strictures." More of the writing for the exam had to be done in class than was usually the case, and time was shorter for the accomplishment of as full a process as the students had come to want. The exam schedule interfered with what my students had come to consider the necessary churning process to get their butter.

That reaction was a welcome one. Not many years before, I had been desperately trying to get students interested in revising: "What d'ya mean, revise?" Now my students were asking, "But what if I get a neat idea in the last hour?" I was glad for the difference.

Response and Responsibility: The Role of Teachers' Comments in Revision

Nicholas Coles
University of Pittsburgh

A recent article by Nancy Sommers offers a chilling demonstration of the need to give further thought to the effect of our written comments on our students' willingness and ability to revise their papers.[1] Typically, according to Sommers' research, teachers' comments, however they may be intended, read as arbitrary, mean-spirited, vague, and rubber-stamped. Even worse is the tendency of many comments to give students mixed signals concerning the composing process, conflicting pieces of advice that have the effect of inhibiting precisely what they would promote: "Check your commas and semi-colons and think more about what you are thinking about." If writers are really expected to think more about what they are thinking about, and thereby revise, there is surely, as Sommers points out, "no point in having students correct usage errors or condense sentences that are likely to disappear before the next draft is completed."[2]

What is even more inhibiting than this confounding of editing and revision is the comment's silence about what the writer has managed to say already. In ignoring the fact that the writer's thoughts, however simple, have found some representation in language, however thin, such comments lose the opportunity to draw the student into the activity of revising an achieved text--one way, maybe the most efficient way in which one can think more about what one is thinking about. The student, in other words, is directed to think rather than being empowered to engage in the process of questioning and exploring the language of a written draft--reworking it, adding, cutting, rearranging, re-formulating, re-concluding--in such a way as to experience writing as an activity of thinking, of extending and elaborating the sense one can make of one's subject. What, then, should our comments be, and what can they do to foster a willingness and an ability to undertake this kind of revision?

I have come to think of my responsibility as a reader of students' texts in terms of I. A. Richards' description of a good critic: "He must be adept at experiencing. . .the state of mind relevant to the work of art he is judging."[3] This can best be done, I think, for a Basic Writing paper no less than for a sonnet, through a close and respectful reading, a reading that runs alongside the writer, in critical sympathy with what he or she is finding a way of saying. From this stance our comments can be directed towards helping the student identify, question, and extend the emerging meaning of his or her text. This may involve directing a writer's attention to short cuts and simplifications as well as to places where his or her effort to elaborate an idea has been abandoned, often at a point of fruitful complexity.

We notice clichés and repetitions not as errors, but as alternatives to going forward. We point out contradictions, gaps and breaks in logic, not so much in order to demand reconciliation, or the construction of bridges, but as possible openings to a dialectical shift in the train of thought. Always the intention is to invite writers to become active readers of their own texts so that, on the basis of what they are able to see taking shape there, they may go on in the next draft to produce fuller, smarter, more satisfying representations of themselves and their relations to their subjects.

I can best suggest what it means to assume this kind of stance as a commentator by tracing the changes in a paper from my Basic Writing class which was revised with the aid of my comments. The assignment, which occurred about halfway in a semester-long sequence of assignments on adolescence, asked the student to draw on his or her experience in order to respond to a passage by Edgar Z. Friedenberg, of which the paper's first sentence will serve as a simple précis:

(1) good summary

In Friedenberg's Vanishing Adolescent, he brings up the idea that a conflict between society and an individual going through adolescents is essential for his growth in his individuality. I agree with his idea because I have had experiances proving him right in my eyes.

why not? how punished? (2) Was it a struggle, giving in to them?

One of the experiances that I had that follows this is a personal revolt against athority. When in high school, I would not listen to teachers or any other person in athority in the school system. Because of this I was constantly being punished. Being punished was interfering with how I could go about doing things when not in school. My will wanted to do one thing while the teachers wanted me to do another. After a while of doing this, doing wrong and getting punished for it, I started to comply to what they said. I also started to agree after a little while longer, to what they did and said. It was hard for me when I didn't comply. I was miserable and very frustrated because I couldn't do what I wanted to do. Now that I look back at it, I feel more sure of myself about what I did was right. That is to comply to society or the teachers.

(3) I like this distinction. Can you say more about the difference between complying and agreeing?

The conflict was going against what my teachers which is society, said. It does lead to adulthood because this conflict teaches you things that you didn't know before and does lead to their critical participation in society because you finally do conform, such as I did, which is assuming your place in society. The reason though the conflict is even there is because the individual doesn't agree with what society says is right. This

(4) How is conformity critical?

causes the conflict, but after a while of trial and error the individual realizes that to function freely you have to conform and in conforming you realize that everyone benefits and not only yourself.

⑤ This is an interesting paradox. Can you explain what you mean by it?

⑥ Sam, when you revise this, look again at the quotation from Friedenberg. The situation you describe reads to me like conflict as a process of getting beaten into shape. Is that what you mean, or what he means, by conflict being essential to one's growth?

The major difficulty with this paper as I read it is that it claims to represent a conflict which is, in fact, foreclosed in favor of one side--the advisability of conformity--before the conflict has been explored. One sign of this is that the history of the conflict is described only in an abstract and skimpy way, albeit with some feeling; it is not enacted in the writing with the kind of fullness and specificity that could allow the writer to draw from it a personally informed conclusion about the value (or the damage) of conflict in adolescence. Another sign of the writer's turning away from what was obviously a painful complexity is the suddenness of the narrator's conversion to conformity in the middle of the second paragraph; there is no account of the process of change. Some of my comments, then, are addressed to the skeletal nature of his account of the conflict, while others dig at the neatness of his premature resolution of it. My intention is to provoke the writer into reopening the question. Let me go through my notations seriatim in order to explain my intentions comment by comment.

1. "Good summary" because he has succeeded in translating the terms of the passage into a proposition he can test against his experience, and also because he clearly understands Friedenberg well enough to be in a position to see what he does not yet see, that the experience he relates does not fit Fridenberg's notion of benign conflict as neatly as he assumes.

2. Here I am appealing for some narrative detail and explanation, hoping that in bringing with it more of the writer's feeling about the conflict, it will provide a more tangible basis for exploring what the conflict was about.

3. In "comply" and "agree" the writer has found useful terms for a distinction which I see as central to his subject, since the distance between complying and agreeing may encompass considerable growth in individuality (or its erosion). But he has not yet said what the terms mean to him, nor how he got from one to the other.

4. As the contradiction in the sentence implies, the writer uses Friedenberg's phrase "critical participation" as if the adjective "critical" were

not there. I am pointing out the word in hopes that he will notice how its contrast with his use of "conformity" goes to the heart of the issue he is engaged in writing about.

5. Whether one agrees with it or not, the aphorism that "to function freely you have to conform" embodies a sophisticated insight, and I wanted the writer to explore its implications. But I scared him away from his own working here by giving it my teacherly label "paradox." The idea itself, though, recurred with greater definition in the revision.

6. In my final comment I am asking this writer to reconsider the relation of the situation he has described to the formulation from Friedenberg he began with by telling him what this version of his experience sounded like to me: "a process of getting beaten into shape." As it turned out, I was also giving him a hint of an alternative language he could use to disconfirm the language of "athority" which was holding him powerless to take a more critical view of his experience.

The next assignment in the sequence called for a revision of the Friedenberg paper. I have excerpted only the final section of Sam's revised draft which, as it moves out from a much fuller narrative of his troubles with authority, offers an example of what engaging in the process of revision may be said to do for a writer:

> ...Their correcting me was actually them punishing me. The punishments ranged from getting a good crack across the head from my parents to being made to help in the old folks home. This made me angrier because they were treating me like a dog and giving me the respect that I had the intelligence of one also. By a dog I mean that if you don't want a dog to do something you punish it, and sooner or later the dog won't do it in fear that he will get punished. So I kept doing worse things and in return got worse punishments. After about two and a half years of this I started to realize that to do the things wrong just wasn't worth the punishment I would get. Just like the dog that realizes it just isn't worth the beating to go on the rug but easier or less painful to cry at the door. So after a long while I started to accept society's ideas not for the reason that I agreed or understood why but because I was almost actually trained to.
>
> As for right now that I am a little older and have passed through some of my conflict, I do agree with some of society's ideas not because I was so well trained that I really believe them but because I see now that for everyone to do as much as they want to can't be done without hindering someone else. I have been hindered because of

> disrespect for my being which isn't right. After this I look back and see that I wasn't only being trained but it was an indirect way of teaching one respect. There are though things that I still don't agree with such as doing homework but I have learned I will do it for a better grade so I can do better in later life, which is just respect for myself. Maybe later in my life I will agree with the things I don't agree with and maybe change my mind about the things I agree with now.

What seems to me to have happened in and through thi revision is that the fleshing out of Sam's story has been the means to his engaging in a much more complex and sustained examination of the issues of freedom and conformity it raises than was the case in his first paper. One mark of this is the emergence of the metaphor of the dog which signals a reformulation of the writer's conception of himself in relation to authority.[4] It is possible that my comments about "giving into them" and "getting beaten into shape" prompted the new image, but the writer's development of the metaphor, particularly his giving it that poignant twist whereby the reward for learning not to "go" on the rug is not to be let out to sniff around the neighborhood, or even to be taken for a walk, but instead to be left to cry at the door--this is the writer's own. That the avoidance of pain should lead to more pain suggests perhaps that the writer is not as assured as he later sounds that the rewards of conformity are worth the costs.

In any event, the metaphor provides him with a new term for this process of enforced conformity: he was "trained." However--and this is a mark of someone exploring thought in writing--as soon as he has his new label, he begins to question and qualify it: he was "not so well trained that he really believes society's ideas "; he "wasn't only being trained." And what he now sets against the notion of "training" is his previous term "agree," an opposition which enables him to refuse the total capitulation training implies and reclaim a space for himself as someone who will make up his own mind about society's demands and who can, when necessary, as in the case of the homework, negotiate a pragmatic compromise with them. Structurally he opens this space by expanding the chronological separation, only hinted at before, between the era of compliance and that of provisional agreement. He complied then because he was trained to like a dog, but since he is, as he implies, not somebody's dog but his own person, he is now in a position to agree or disagree--and not, one notices, on the basis of some cantankerous do-your-own-thing individualism, but rather of a nicely detached sense of where he ends and "society" begins and of how they might get along for now.

It is customary to be wiser because older, but the cliché here is more than a cliché because the writer has learned from this conflict something very different from what he was taught. From a process of acculturation which he describes as having been like housebreaking a puppy, and which expressed "disrespect for his being," he has arrived at, or perhaps wrung, an ethic of "respect" (another new term) for others, for himself, for his future. His ability to convert the one into the other is in large part a function of his ability as a language-user. He has figured this out through writing this out,

a process that represents a step in his growth as a writer certainly and perhaps also in the kind of self-definition Friedenberg claims as the outcome of conflict and the prerequisite of "critical participation" in society.

I am not suggesting that it is my comments that pushed this writer into revising. Much of students' willingness to do serious rewriting depends on the rhetorical context of the course, the design and sequencing of its assignments, the tone of class discussion of papers, and of course individual conferences. And even with a supporting atmosphere, revision will not happen unless it is demanded regularly, as part of the writing process.

What our written comments can do is translate these incentives into sets of specific opportunities for exploring meaning: "sets" because in them we can develop a consistent line of response to a central issue in the text; "specific" because they allow us to address the language the writer has already used, suggesting the implications and possibilities of particular choices; "opportunities" because they serve as a way of opening up important questions which are implicit in the student's writing; and "meaning" because our comments recognize the seriousness of such things as the intellectual endeavor exemplified in this student writer's having made his adolescent experience with rebellion into a way of taking on the perennial and paradoxical question of the competing demands of individual freedom and social existence. By responding to our students' writing as actively and respectfully as we do to our other reading, by behaving as readers of their writing the way we would like them to behave in it as writers, by enacting in our comments how we take what our students do seriously, we in effect empower them with our best to do theirs when they revise.

Notes

1. Nancy Sommers, "Responding to Student Writing," College Composition and Communication, 33 (1982), 148-56.

2. Sommers, pp. 151, 154-5.

3. I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (New York: Harcourt, 1948), p. 114.

4. I learned to pay attention to "a change of mind signalled by the emergence of new metaphors" from Susan V. Wall, "Revision in a Rhetorical Context: Case Studies of First Year College Writers," Diss. University of Pittsburgh 1982, p. 64.

Combatting the Elevator Essay

Karen Hodges
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Between classes in the Communications Center on the University of Arkansas campus, it takes an average of five minutes to go via elevator from the first to the third floor where many of the English classes meet. It seems that no matter where the elevator is when a potential rider on the ground floor pushes the buttom, the elevator always makes a grand sweep from the basement to the seventh floor before remembering to return for first-floor passengers, stopping first at every other floor on the way. Five years ago; my CC 315 students were turning in such throw-together garbage in the name of essays that I accused them of writing elevator essays. I envisioned them entering the Center, noting the crowds of students and absence of available elevators, and saying to themselves, "Oh well, I might as well write my English paper while I'm waiting." My class members were amused at my description of their writing "process," but humor was not my primary reason for being in the class. I needed to launch an all-out attack on the elevator essay if I were ever to teach these students how to write. It was then I began research into the theory and classroom application of revising (I prefer the more active verbal forms to the static form "revision"), believing from personal experience that writing is revising. My attack focused on three fronts: modeling, re-seeing, and reworking the re-seen.

With my memorable elevator class as catalyst, I have evolved a method of beginning each writing class modeling for the students a definition of writing as revising. Since this approach to composing is unfamiliar to most students, they need to witness what my expectations are for them in the course. Thus while the students are working on a short writing sample for me during the first class period, I begin one for them in turn, a behavior which in itself intrigues them (an English teacher writing <u>with</u> them?). Before the next class period, I reproduce copies of my draft, complete with false starts, crossed-out words, and organizational arrows. The writing is never very good, but, then, that is precisely my point. In class we go over the draft (and I use and define this word for them); I recount as well as I can remember exactly why I started as I did and crossed out or rearranged certain words, confessing my structural problems as a writer and asking for suggestions for improvement in areas I view as especially weak. Students are generally far better critics of someone else's writing than their own and understandably enjoy shredding their instructor's efforts; at least, I have never lacked for ample criticism of my sample essay. It is true that at this beginning point in the class the students' comments are vague--"There is something wrong somewhere in the third paragraph" or "I don't like the ending." But it is a discussion about revising, and it is a beginning. I dutifully write down all of their comments, revise the draft before our next meeting, and again make copies for the students. During the discussion of my second draft, I explain to the students which of their comments I

incorporated and why, which of their comments I discarded and why. The latter point, emphasizing both the integrity of the writer and the necessity of developing and exercising critical judgment in revising, is a crucial step preparatory to the students' working in groups on one another's essays.

Since the students do not yet possess either this critical acumen with which to discuss classmates' essays helpfully or the bravery to expose their drafts to the class, I next move into modeling, phase II. I bring into class sample drafts, penned both by previous students (who have given me permission) and by famous writers.[1] I introduce the students to some basic working terminology at this point, giving them copies of the evaluation sheet we will use during the semester. Using this guide, we discuss the drafts for content, structure, apparent audience and purpose, wording, sentence structure, usage, writer's image. When we have exhausted our collective critical resources on a particular draft, I hand out the writer's final version of the piece. The students really seem to enjoy seeing which of our suggestions the writer was smart enough to follow. I also get good mileage from suggestions "ignored": we discuss both why the writer apparently did not alter some part we thought he or she should have and how writing by its very nature can always be changed. It is impossible to say whether the students learn more from examining peer models or famous-writer models. They appear to learn different lessons from each: the student drafts are more relevant to their own writing in content and style, but the famous-writer models serve to underscore for them the important point, and often a shock, that a piece of professional writing does not spring forth in perfect form, complete with justified margins, on the pages of a literary anthology. Writing is revising.

While we are involved in modeling, phase II, the students are not otherwise idle writers. They have begun their class notebooks, which are divided into four sections: Ideas, Drafts, Revisions, Personal Handbook.[2] The "Ideas" section is, in effect, a commonplace book (rather than a journal) where the students record notes, reactions, observations that have the potential of growing into essays. I welcome newspaper clippings and ideas learned in other classes as well as more personal entries. The "Drafts" section is just what its name states: the place in the notebook where the student selects an idea from the first section of the notebook and begins experimenting with ways to develop and structure the seed into a full-blown essay. The "Revisions" section contains revised versions of the drafts that the student considers to be "final" versions ready for my reactions, or if a particular revision is not yet final enough, then the student is required to append a note explaining what else needs to be done before I take up notebooks again. The "Personal Handbook" grows as the semester progresses (or for some students expands until midsemester when it has reached virtually its final form). When I read a "final" revision, I evaluate it according to the evaluation sheet, which places the emphasis properly on the larger rhetorical concerns of a piece of writing. But I also make a notation in the margin next to any line that contains a usage error. The first half of the semester I use guided notations, such as "sp," "c.s.," "ref"; after midterm, I simply put a checkmark next to any line that contains a usage problem. Either way the student has to find the error; then he or she writes the original sentence in the handbook, the corrected sentence, and the reason for the correction. I encourage students to subdivide their personal handbooks into categories of rules (like punctuation,

spelling, sentence structure) so that they are easier to use as proofreader's guides on subsequent essays.

Before I return to other specific techniques of teaching revising, let me mention three other points in relation to the notebook. One, the notebook becomes the class text; I use no other textbooks, although I do make sure the campus bookstore has on hand a standard handbook for students who need guidance in developing their personal handbooks. Two, I take up the notebooks every two weeks; thus the students' regular assignments over a two-week period are to continue to collect ideas, to write at least one draft, to write one "final" revision, and to make the pertinent entries in their handbooks. I check all four sections of the notebook, stressing to the students that a sole essay handed in by itself tells me next to nothing about a student's progress through the writing process. Three, I put no grades on the revisions, just ample comments and a summary on an evaluation sheet. At midterm, I do give out evaluations translated into standard letter grades and tell the students they may ask me at any other point in the semester for a letter-grade standing. I "withhold" grades because I am trying to emphasize through every means possible that writing is revising, and I believe that letter grades signify to students finished products, which writing never is.

In addition to modeling revising for the students and using the four-part notebooks to stress the centrality of revising in the writing process, I also use two techniques to help students re-see their drafts from other perspectives. One device I have already alluded to is the use of peer-group evaluations. I begin this process about three weeks into the term, allowing time first for the students to grow more comfortable with our working terminology, with our method of discussing drafts with an eye toward revising, and with one another. I consider four students per group to be the optimum size for a class period since I encourage the following format: each student in turn reads his or her essay out loud to the group members who follow each reading with general reactions; then the students read the other essays silently, using the evaluation sheet to record suggestions. I move from group to group, answering questions and sitting in on each group for a few minutes to keep the students on task. At the end of the period, each student has three written reactions to his or her essay to use as a guideline for revising. The viewpoints are sometimes diverse, of course, providing students with an additional important lesson in the role of audience in writing. No peer group is ever permanent; I shift members after every two sessions to allow for greater latitude in peer response.

The other technique I use to teach students how to re-see their drafts from another angle I term "Topics for Revision." Once a month I give them the following list and require them to rewrite one of their previous drafts or revisions according to one of the following suggestions:

1) Change point of view: within the discourse (a different "self" of the writer speaks) or outside the discourse (the "audience" of the original draft responds).

2) Change structure: move from inductive to deductive, for example, or from a unit structure to a norm method of development.

3) Change focus: select a small portion of the original as a new focus and expand.

4) Change tone: try a comic/satiric approach to a serious subject, for example.

5) Change purpose, such as "complaining" in the first draft, then persuading for change in the revision.

6) Change audience.

7) Change mode: if the original was a comparison/contrast of two people, for example, rework the discourse into a broader essay of classification.

8) Change genre: rather than an essay defining failure, for example, write a short story illustrating this trait.

9) Experiment with different "publishers": how would the language and format vary, for example, between writing an article on a woman's football team for Newsweek and rewriting it for Sports Illustrated or Psychology Today or Redbook?[3]

Finally, I have developed a checklist to help students rework the re-seen as they prepare their final revisions. The checklist contains specific suggestions for evaluating the thoroughness of the content, the logic of the structure, and the style of the sentences (see appendix 1). From experience I can say that both the content check and the sentence style analysis work very well; the guideline for evaluating structure is still not concrete enough to do all I would like it to do, I suppose because it draws on the students' ability (or lack of it) to pick out main ideas. I offer, therefore, another system for analyzing structure, a fairly ingenious flow-chart model drawn up by someone I would like to thank but cannot because I do not know the source (see appendix 2).

This system of teaching writing-as-revising actually requires less work on the instructor's part than does the traditional method of assign and grade, assign and grade, ad infinitum. It does require muscles to lug all the notebooks home every two weeks, but it really puts the burden for improvement on the students, a proper emphasis. Because of the organization of the class, the students are prevented from writing elevator themes; thus the results are far better, requiring fewer notations from my pen. As a bonus, I also feel more certain than I did before that the writing belongs to my students rather than being some classic pieces filched from fraternity or sorority files. The notebooks, moreover, give me access to important information I had never had before when I took up only the students' supposedly final efforts: I can look at drafts of a revised essay to pinpoint where something went wrong or to analyze how the student is coming along in his or her internalizing of the writing process. Next to most important of these final evaluative points, I enjoy teaching writing now more than I ever have--the classes are relaxed, productive, fun. Most important, of course, are the students' progress and reactions. My last experience with the course netted the students the best final grades I have ever given in a writing class--nothing below a C, mostly A's and B's--

and the class the highest student evaluations I have ever received--1.2 on a scale of 1 (high) to 5 (low), even though the students gave a "very time-consuming" in answer to the question on amount of work required. Not bad for a required course with a captive audience in a building with a slow elevator.

Notes

1. Two sources I have drawn on heavily for manuscript versions of published materials are Philip Gaskell's From Writer to Reader (Oxford, 1978) and Wallace Hildick's Word for Word (Norton, 1965). Two particular pieces I have had success with in class are Walt Whitman's "A Noiseless Patient Spider" and the ending of D. H. Lawrence's "Odour of Chrysanthemums." Because I found myself collecting and studying so many different authors' drafts, I compiled a bibliography of my findings which may be of use to others hunting for sources to teach revising; it is published in Style, XV, 2(1982).

2. For the idea of the Personal Handbook I am indebted to Sam Watson, Director of Composition, University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

3. "Topics for Revision" is the final section of my essay "A History of Revision: Theory versus Practice" in Revising: New Essays for Teachers of Writing, ed. Ronald A. Sudol, Urbana: NCTE (with ERIC), 1982, 24-42. Although my article takes a historical perspective on revising, most of the essays in this anthology present techniques for teaching revising in the classroom.

Appendix 1

From Draft through Revision

1. Check adequate development of the content of your essay by transforming yourself into an excessively curious reader. After reading each sentence of your draft, ask "why" and squeeze the answers in between lines.
   For example: You wrote "The house was poorly built." You ask "why": the builder was drunk. You write "the builder was drunk" in between the lines.
   When you get through asking "why" for every sentence in the draft, you will have doubled your content. Now, you will also have produced a lot of garbage, many details you do not want to include in the essay's final version. Read back through the doubled draft, circling material you want to use. Then work that material into the draft: Because the builder was drunk, the house was poorly built.

2. Check structure of essay by
   a. reading introduction to essay for key words that set up reader's expectations for type of development and order
      for example: There are several ways (approach to topic) to prevent a builder (topic. . .
      from drinking on the job (. . .topic), notably by buying
      property in a dry county, by checking his desk. . .
      (order of subdivisions of topic)

      and then comparing these controls to the way the essay develops. In this case, a paragraph on buying property in a dry county should precede one on checking the builder's desk. If there is not a match between the keys in the introduction and the rest of the essay, then either the introduction or the ordering of the essay's parts will have to be changed.

   AND/OR

   b. analyzing structure of essay in margin, accounting for every paragraph. Does the extracted pattern seem logical? (For example, a pattern of "introduction, example, cause, example, effect" looks rather scattery.)

   AND/OR

   c. cutting the essay into paragraphs and experimenting with different arrangements.

3. Strengthen structure of essay by providing transition.

4. Finally, before advancing to the editing stage of the writing process, double-check your revised draft against the controls you sketched out:
   a. audience: formulate a brief character sketch in your head. BECOME THIS PERSON. How will this person with his or her background, quirks, etc., react to your topic, development? Change any feature of the draft that does not mesh with the audience.

4. b. purpose: do you feel your draft persuades, entertains, informs--or whatever you had stated earlier was the purpose of this essay?

   c. writer: you, right? Look at all the elements of the essay you have so far--topic, order, vocabulary, purpose, etc. What kind of image of yourself do these features project? Don't like this image? Change the features of the writing that convey what you feel is a negative image.

5. In matters stylistic, start with the simplect: check your handbook to refresh your memory on your favorite usage errors. Tediously check your draft for these slips, correcting anything amiss.

6. More interestingly, aim for denotative and connotative exactness in your diction. Go back through the essay word-for-word: any word that can be made more specific and/or suggestive, make it so (for example, "Ford Mustang" instead of "car"; "sprinted" rather than "ran"). Use a thesaurus in combination with a dictionary to help with expanding your vocabulary, specifically for aid in substituting synonyms for deadly repetition.

7. To improve sentence structure:

   a. go through essay and circle every and you find. Then go back, and get rid of them in whatever ways seem appropriate to the sentence (as in "She went home and fell asleep" becomes "After she got home, she fell asleep").

   b. locate any sentence of five words or fewer: try combining it with an adjacent sentence. For example: "She went home. The mailman had left for her five bills" becomes "When she arrived home, she found that the mailman. . . ."

Appendix 2

If you are in doubt about the structure of a particular paragraph, then try analyzing it according to the following flowchart:

List major points in paragraph:

1. _____

2. _____

Is 2 related to 1?

Yes___ (Then keep in this paragraph.)

NO___ Does this belong in another existing paragraph of your paper?

Yes___ (Then transfer this point.)

NO___ Are there other facts you should add to this one to make a new paragraph?

Yes___ List these facts:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Write your new paragraph below. Where will you place it in the paper?

NO___ (Then use only this for a new paragraph.)

3. _____

Is 3 related to 2 and 1?

Yes___ (Then keep in this paragraph.)

NO___ Does this belong in another existing paragraph of your paper?

Yes___ (Then move this point.)

NO___ Are there other facts you should add to this one?

Yes___ List these facts:

1. _____

2. _____

NO___ (Then use only this for a new paragraph.)

Reconciling Revision with Reality in Composition Teaching

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The current emphasis on the writing process and its components--prewriting, writing, and revision--requires a shift in the relationship between the instructor and the student. Instead of distance, such as that between lecturer and listener, composition teachers seek closeness, such as that between the piano teacher and the novice pianist. Hence, teachers of writing are generally becoming more personally involved with their students to inculcate in them a sense of the writing process. Some assert that this emphasis is merely a fad: "Writing-as-process and sentence-combining are now in. We'll bet you a fifth of Bushmill's Irish Whiskey that they will be out by the time the eighth edition of Writing with a Purpose is published."[1] As the director of one freshman program, I disagree with the assertion about process; because it shows students that good writing results from always difficult and often disorderly work, process theory, though incomplete at this time, has already made a lasting contribution to composition pedagogy.

Unfortunately, all is not entirely well. The concepts of prewriting, writing, and revision, their combined external linearity and their particular internal simultaneity and recursiveness, can be taught adequately in the classroom. However, having students apply these concepts requires the personal engagement of the instructor with the student's progressing work. The workshop approach--having students write in the classroom as the instructor moves about answering questions and giving advice--does not permit, in my judgment, the necessary constant interaction between the instructor and the novice. We are left, then, with only the writing conference, in which the instructor attends fully to the work of one student, to make process instruction meaningful.

Unfortunately, all is still not entirely well. The pedagogical necessity of the writing conference conflicts with the economic necessity of high student enrollment in composition classes. Devotion to conference teaching is thus severely penalized; the composition teacher who meets classes, holds conferences, evaluates drafts, holds more conferences, grades revisions, and handles all other tasks pertaining to composition instruction has little time left for anything else. Because enrollments probably will remain high for several years, directors of freshman programs are caught between sacrificing the sound pedagogy of the writing conference on the one hand, and insisting that composition teachers sacrifice themselves on the other. Although there is no entirely satisfactory way to handle this dilemma (other than reducing class enrollments by half), I would like to suggest one method of reconciling revision and the writing conference with the realities of high enrollment, a method that seeks to provide sound teaching without sacrificing the morale of

instructors. My explanation requires, first, an understanding of revision appropriate for novice writers, and then a consideration of the practical application of revision so understood.

The term revision does not now have an entirely stable meaning. Following the order of the components of classical rhetoric--invention, arrangement, and style (often modernized as prewriting, writing, and rewriting)--some believe that revision involves, toward the end of the process, a general cleaning up of the written discourse through improvements in style. Thus, Arn and Charlene Tibbetts devote a chapter of Strategies of Rhetoric to revising and editing, but the activity is concerned exclusively with the sentence.[2] Restricting revision considerably, this view seems to ignore many possibilities for improving the written discourse. Following the opinions of some experienced writers, others believe, with Nancy I. Sommers, that revision is the "recursive shaping of thought by language"[3]--through adding, deleting, and reordering at all levels from single word through general meaning--carried out "continually throughout the writing of a work" (p. 380). Thus, writers revise to discover meaning (p. 385), to find "general patterns of development" (p. 384), and to deal with matters of style (p. 387) as they seek to state what they mean. With invention, arrangement, and style applied recursively from the first stroke of the pen to the last, this view of revision includes the entire process of writing and requires the writer's sustained intellectual immersion in it. Still others, such as Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell, indicate that revision includes all substantive, organizational, and stylistic changes made in a discourse after the completion of the first draft.[4] Revision, in this view, consists of activities occurring in the middle and at the end of the writing process.

The first view--that revision is sentence improvement carried out at the end of the process--clearly emphasizes correctness and clarity in the sentence. The view reasonably indicates that good writing is clear and correct writing, but it also indicates, less reasonably, that good writing is merely clear and correct writing, a view frequently held by students. The possibility that the content and organization of an initial or intermediate draft (which are often regarded by students as final) could be improved through major changes is not addressed. Thus, this first view of revision is incomplete.

The second view--that revision operates recursively throughout the writing process--describes quite well the activities of experienced writers. However, students trying to imitate these activities may be overwhelmed, for they must commit themselves to the all-inclusive activities for changing their initial writing almost as soon as it occurs.[5] Hence, students write an initial draft, revising as they progress, and then write and revise intermediate drafts; the constant revision slowly shapes their progressing work toward a final product that might seem to remain capriciously unfinished. This writing-as-revision, I think, lies beyond the capacity (and the willingness) of most students, unless they work under the immediate direction of an experienced teacher in repeated writing conferences focused on the evolution and development of one discourse.

Generally, the teaching of the writing process is difficult because its protean dynamics are not accurately represented as a series of static steps revealed in progressively improved intermediate products. This teaching is

also difficult because more is known about the processes used by individual writers than about the process in general. For these reasons, teachers do not teach process to students as much as they help students form and refine their own individual processes. Because "individual conferences are the principal form of instruction in the writing process approach,"[6] teachers must allocate instructional time between classroom and conference. Paul A. Eschholz states that at the University of Vermont classes regularly meet once or twice a week and, in addition, teachers hold 15-minute conferences with each student every other week.[7] Assuming that these classes meet only once a week, I find that the typical teaching assistant with two sections of 27 students each, under the Vermont system, accumulates a total of 140 hours of classroom and conference teaching[8] (time spent evaluating essays is not included), as opposed to 96 hours of teaching two sections in the classroom only. Yet this 140-hour total seems minimal; for any conference, in my experience, involves a starting and ending ritual that increases the overall time to at least 20 minutes, which, under the Vermont system, would bring the TA's semester total to 176 hours.[9] While the TA's load is enormous with 432 conferences (and much starting and stopping), the instructor teaching three or four courses would have an astronomical total of teaching and conference hours.[10] Thomas A. Carnicelli recommends that teachers handling such a burden meet no classes after the first week, have conferences with each student at least once every two weeks, and read all papers, making no written comments, during the conference rather than before it.[11] Carnicelli adds that, though in-conference reading presents problems initially (p. 112), teachers mastering the technique, tired after a day of conferences, at least have no papers to take home and grade (p. 111).

There are, however, some predictable problems with Carnicelli's suggestions. I can imagine Johnny (the one who cannot write) explaining to his father that no classes are held in freshman composition; I can envision the father's response and his call to the school president. Unfortunately, at this time, the teacher's substituting one conference for two weeks of regular classes would not be accepted by the administration of many schools, regardless of the justification. Also, the absence of a regular class meeting--the absence of the mere mechanics of going to a certain place on certain days at a certain time--might encourage student irresponsibility rather heartily. Few administrations would defend a system in which two cuts constituted absence from almost a quarter of the course; few parents could resist protesting that their failed son or daughter had been cheated in a course offering so few contact hours and so much free time between them.[12] The second view of revision applied in its totality, then, seems impractical. Teachers who meet classes, evaluate drafts of essays, grade finished products, and carry out many other required tasks--and who also hold 432 15-minute conferences per semester--certainly are likely to provide excellent writing instruction, but in this service to freshmen they obliterate much of their personal lives. However, the concept of writing-as-revision, as well as the concept of sentence improvement, has considerable influence on the third view.

Holding that revision involves substantive, organizational, and stylistic changes made after the completion of the first draft, the third view accommodates a division of revision activities into two categories: the addition, deletion, and movement of information; and sentence improvement and error correction.[13] Each category involves what Peter Elbow explains as "creating and criticizing," the positive, creative impulse and the negative, critical

impulse,[14] the two being major components of the total writing process. Addition is creative, though deletion and movement are critical; rewriting awkward and unclear sentences, as well as errors in grammar (the term here including punctuation, mechanics, spelling, and expression), is creative, though finding sentences and errors in need of rewriting is critical. Helping students understand and use these impulses is important in revision (and in writing generally). Teachers endorsing this view of revision may hold several related beliefs about writing, revision, and the novice writer.

First, the novice should determine the thesis of an essay as clearly as possible before writing is begun. If details discovered later refute the thesis, the novice should modify it if possible or abandon it and seek another. (If a paper turned in as complete has an indefensible thesis, the teacher needs to discuss the problem in a special conference to help the student see the problem and get started again.)

Second, the first draft results from the students' work with a variety of prewriting techniques and, because some honest work stands behind it, represents what students often view as a finished product. Usually, this draft has a defensible thesis but shows inadequacies primarily in the quantity and quality of detail and in the handling of grammar and sentence construction. These recurring problems thus constitute the primary issues addressed in conferences on revision.

Third, a major concern, therefore, of a teacher demonstrating revision activities is to show students how to discover accurate and meaningful details concerning the subject and (we would hope) supporting the thesis. Introducing the student to two or three heuristic systems, perhaps only at the simplest level, will help here. Well-known systems such as Burke's Pentad, the tagmemic matrix of Young, Becker, and Pike, and the problem-solving format of Richard Larson[15] can help students survey what they already know about their subject and show them what they need to discover for a complete understanding. Also, teachers should help students utilize what Sommers calls "the recursive shaping of thought by language" (p. 378) by showing them how to gain from their own text, which already states one meaning, suggestions for other more significant meanings, the process repeated until the students (and the instructor) are pleased with the correlation between thought and expression. The uses of heuristics and recursive shaping, usually resulting in the addition of significant information, are crucial revision activities, though encouraging students to displace generalities with newly discovered details and to move them about for appropriate emphasis is also important.

Fourth, the other major concern of the teacher in the revision conference is to show students how to recognize poor sentences and grammatical errors, primarily through close proofreading repeated enough to rid the text of carelessness (students recognize most errors when they are pointed out). At the same time, students must understand that all writers have to learn the conventions of standard English well enough to avoid serious errors and that all writers have to respect the language and the reader by handling lesser matters properly, often through consulting handbooks and dictionaries when they have doubts about grammatical constructions, word meanings, and spelling. Peter Elbow states that writers who want their work "to be taken seriously" must rid the final draft of mistakes or risk leading "readers to notice other

weaknesses" and to assume "even if unconsciously" that the writer is stupid. Thus, "removing errors may well be the most 'cost effective' of all revising activities" (pp. 168-9).

Last, teachers should have reasonable expectations. Freshmen should not be required to immerse themselves in the process of writing and revision to the extent expected of a graduate student writing a research paper on Samuel Beckett. Teachers should remember that generally they are not teaching apprentices in literary criticism and creative writing; instead, they are providing students of agriculture, engineering, business, and journalism with a foundation upon which they may attain adequacy or excellence in the writing they do in the remainder of their college courses and in their professional careers. (Too often, I think, the information and the methods presented by composition theorists and textbook authors are appropriate only for young people already committed to writing as the work of their lives.) Teachers must remember that the intellectual growth of students does not end with the course in freshman composition.

The third view of revision, as well as the related beliefs, constitutes the basis upon which the composition staff at Oklahoma State University, with well over one hundred freshman sections each semester, encourages students to improve their writing. The teaching assistants, normally limited to two sections, and the instructors, limited to three, meet classes three hours each week in the 16-week semester. After the first essay has been turned in, marked, graded, and returned to the students, the teachers regularly hold 20-minute conferences with each student to explain and demonstrate revision (and the writing process generally). In conferences, teachers help students learn and apply heuristics and recursive shaping to improve detail, and they help students develop good proofreading skills, as well as respect for the language and the reader, to improve grammar. Individual problems are also addressed. After the conferences, students rewrite the entire essay, following the instructor's counsel in accordance with their ability and willingness. The instructor then grades the rewritten essay. If its quality is high, teachers raise the grade of the original essay by one letter, both the original and the rewrite resulting in a single grade. (It would seem fair to grade only the rewrite; however, if the original essay does not count, students do not work seriously on it, instead waiting for the rewrite before they expend real effort.) If the quality of the rewrite is low, teachers lower the grade of the original by one letter, or more if the rewrite is merely a clean recopying of the original with no improvement in detail. Having a chance for a higher grade motivates most students to participate well in the conferences and to work seriously on their rewriting.

The second essay calls for a repetition of this entire procedure. For the rest of the course and the five additional essays[15] (excluding the examination essay), no regular conferences are held, though teachers call special conferences to deal with unusual problems. After writing their first drafts for these later essays, students handle revision on their own by following the procedures demonstrated in the initial conferences. Usually, the resulting essays fall short of adequacy and need further work. Thus, while evaluating these essays, instructors single out serious deficiencies--problems ranging from inadequately detailed paragraphs to comma splices--for required revision. (A special marking distinguishes problems requiring revision from other matters

that are marked or annotated.) Instructors assign grades to the essays and return them. Students then carry out the required revision work and also provide a brief explanation of each problem or error. Students turn in the revision work along with the essay. The teacher evaluates the additional work, referring as necessary to the essay for comparison. If the quality of the revision work is high, the grade of the essay is raised from one to eight points, as appropriate; if the quality is low, the grade is lowered from one to eight points. Again, the chance for an improved grade motivates most students to treat their revision work seriously. (The two-hour, in-class examination essay stands as it is completed.)

Under this system, teachers with two composition courses hold at least 108 conferences and meet all classes, accumulating 132 conference and classroom hours. This total is not much less than that of the Vermont system, which I objected to earlier in this essay; accordingly, in the 1983 fall semester, OSU composition teachers will not meet one week of classes in partial compensation for the required 36 conference hours. Looking ahead beyond that time, I can foresee further reductions in classroom hours that will enable teachers to increase their conference hours. What I cannot foresee now is a substantial reduction in class size, the one occurrence that would make writing instruction truly effective for students and relatively reasonable for teachers. High class enrollment is now the seemingly insurmountable barrier to excellence.

The Oklahoma State system, then, is one attempt to reconcile revision with reality in freshman composition--to accommodate both the demands of individual instruction and the burden of high enrollment. Does the system work? The process of revision, even when narrowed primarily to two reasonably defined activities, cannot be inculcated in students during two short conferences. Yet, OSU teachers believe that the conferences (which allow them to get down to business quickly in the course and to suggest that students do the same) provide some individual revision instruction not possible otherwise and far better than none at all; they also believe that the later revision work enables them to monitor individual student weaknesses and to help remedy them. The students, however, have mixed opinions about the system. There are the few compliments from good students, of course, but the many other students who have trouble with the workload evince an anxiety reflected in the combined drop and failure rate exceeding 20 percent in many semesters. Does the system work? My answer is yes, but the yes is surely tentative.

Notes

1. Arn Tibbetts and Charlene Tibbetts, "Can Composition Textbooks Use Composition Research?," College English, 44(1982), 857-8.

2. Arn Tibbetts and Charlene Tibbetts, Strategies of Rhetoric, 4th ed. (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1983), pp. 208-17.

3. Nancy I. Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," College Composition and Communication, 31(1980), 378.

4. Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell, Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin, 1983), pp. 24-5.

5. A proposal for a composition textbook that I recently reviewed included this assertion: "We hope to get the student engaged in revision with the writing of the very first paragraph."

6. Donald M. Murray, "Writing as Process: How Writing Finds Its Own Meaning," in Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition, ed. Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland (Urbana: NCTE, 1980), pp. 15-6.

7. Paul A. Escholz, "The Prose Models Approach: Using Products in the Process," in Eight Approaches, p. 27.

8. The total consists of 32 class hours (16 class hours per section per semester, doubled) and 108 conference hours (54 students X 1/4 hour X 8 weeks). These figures and others in this essay are based on a 16-week semester without vacations.

9. This total consists of 32 class hours and 144 conference hours (54 students X 1/3 hour X 8 weeks).

10. Watching a recent television comedy, I heard this statement: "She was an English teacher for 25 years; then she went berserk and set fire to the gymnasium."

11. Thomas A. Carnicelli, "The Writing Conference: A One-to-One Conversation," in Eight Approaches, pp. 110-11.

12. What, then, would a satisfactory arrangement be? With a maximum of 16 students per section (and a maximum of two sections), the teacher would meet classes during the first week to explain introductory matters including class and conference hours for the rest of the semester, and during the last week to handle concluding matters. In between, classes would meet once a week, and half-hour conferences would be held with eight students every other week. Thus, the teacher with two sections would have 152 class and conference hours, a high total compensated for by the teacher's having to conduct regular classes 40 times a semester instead of the regular 96 times. Eight 700-word essays would be required from each student, the initial essays allowed two or three revisions, the later papers one revision, the final paper standing as it is handed in. (The ideal situation would be about the same except that the class would be limited to 10 students.)

13. Kirszner and Mandell suggest but do not refine this division.

14. Peter Elbow, Writing with Power (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), p. 7. See also pages 8-12.

15. See also Larson's "Discovery through Questioning: A Plan for Teaching Rhetorical Invention," College English, 30 (November 1969), 126-34, for several

additional sets of heuristic questions.

16. At Oklahoma State two composition courses are required. In the first the essay total is eight, including two brief documented essays and the examination essay; in the second course, the essay total is seven, including one 2000-word research paper and the examination. In both courses, the rewriting and revising procedures are the same.

Emerging Rhetorical Modes

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I have ambiguous feelings about the rhetorical modes. I know they exist, of course. I know that they're useful compositional devices, useful methods of organization, useful tools for logical argument. I even admit that when I write, I write in these modes. Sometimes. Unthinkingly. But I don't remember ever being taught them, and I hate to teach them. I have found it more than discouraging to teach composition by teaching rhetorical modes. I taught this way for years though. It seemed reasonable to me that, since every composition textbook I'd ever seen, both high school and college, was organized in terms of these modes, that was the way composition was to be taught.

So I did that. My students were assigned to write comparison/contrast analyses, descriptive essays, cause/effect analyses, and so on. I was doing, I thought, my proper duty by teaching them logical organization according to the experts. I was teaching correctly and well, I thought, so I should have been receiving correct, well written papers. But I wasn't. I was getting very boring, very shallow, very silly essays with titles such as "The Difference between My Mom's Cooking and the Cafeteria Food" and "Mr. Woods and Mr. Cox: A Study in Contrast" for comparison/contrast; "Why Students Cheat--A Look at Parental Pressures and Peer Support" and "Drugs on Campus: Why We Need Them" for cause/effect analysis; "An Awesome Sunset" and "Autumn in Arcadia" for description. I got these and similar titles for ten semesters, and finally I had enough. I could no longer read papers like these.

I began, then, to ignore textbooks altogether. I decided to teach point of view rather than the rhetorical modes. My students wrote first-person narratives based on their memories and dramatic monologues based on their experiences. They wrote autobiographical narratives and dramas based on incidents which were occurring to them at the moment. These papers were well written, they were organized logically, they were unified, and they were great reading. For a while I was happy. Then the guilt began. What was I actually teaching my students? Would this type of writing help them to develop as writers, help them to think and write logically in the future, help them in more advanced writing situations? The answer, I thought, was probably "no."

I began to do some research. I needed to discover why, when I taught correctly and well, according to the textbook experts, my students were writing shallow papers full of shallow arguments and shallow ideas, and why, when I threw over the experts, my students were writing lively papers full of interesting analysis and, incidentally I thought, organized, however loosely, in terms of the rhetorical modes. My research, of course, was of the self-serving variety. I tried to concentrate on only those experts who were themselves

suspicious of the traditional manner of teaching composition.

From Wayne Booth I learned that ". . .students should be made to feel that unless they have said something to someone, they have failed," and that bare truth, at the expense of voice and audience awareness, is a perversion, an unbalance of the rhetorical stance.[1] While I taught form only, the rhetorical modes, I was asking for and receiving bare truth from my students.

From Wendell Johnson I learned that you can't "write writing."[2] When I asked my students to concentrate on the forms rather than on content and their individual contributions to the content, I was asking them to do what can't be done: write writing.

From Sharon Pianko I learned that in spite of assignments designed to elicit writing in a particular rhetorical mode, a majority of writing ends up being narrative, so that what we teachers end up evaluating is not how well students write, but how well they follow directions and forms.[3]

So I was not alone. Others had failed with, or become disillusioned with, the rhetorical modes as well as I had. But now I needed advice. If students tended to write narratives, was it then all right to teach narrative? Was this useful? I conducted more self-serving research and discovered from Edmund Farrell that teachers should concentrate on teaching the rhetorical voice rather than, perhaps, the rhetorical modes.[4] Walker Gibson advised teachers of composition to "force. . .however crudely, various rhetorical characters"[5] upon their students. And finally, James Moffett convinced me that "all writing expresses ideas, regardless of mode and. . .the higher abstractions teachers look for in familiar essay form derive in stages from lower abstractions formulated more personally and fictionally at first."[6]

My students were writing shallow papers, then, because I was asking them to do too much. I was asking them to immediately write in sophisticated forms without first encouraging them to write their ideas, what they knew, in their own, or even a fictional voice. I was asking them to write on a level that they were unprepared for. But what about my own observation that in spite of assignments not designed to elicit writing in the rhetorical modes, I was getting entire paragraphs, whole narratives at times, organized in terms of cause/effect analysis, comparison or contrast, classification and process analysis? Was it my imagination, or wishful thinking maybe?

I began, then, to observe carefully my students' writings to see if, in fact, I could still teach rhetorical organization, and still assign the narratives that led in the past to such good writing. I began my observation with a central question in mind: If we concentrate on teaching rhetorical character, will rhetorical form, or mode, naturally follow? I discovered the answer to be "yes."

The papers I chose to observe were written by first- and second-semester college students, in required writing courses. In making my assignments, I was mindful of what I had read in Moffett and others. We began every writing exercise with freewritings, non-stop short writings. These freewritings were to be written from a particular point of view, but that is all the direction I gave. I required no other form, and subject matter was almost entirely up

to the individual. The results from two quite different assignments follow.

The first paper was to be a first-person narrative, a memory piece, based on experience that students had already had with writing. We did several free-writings, and the students were then asked to write a rough draft of a 500-700-word essay from one or more of these free, memory-based writings. I gave them no further advice about form. When I looked at these rough papers, I found thesis ideas such as "Through the years my feelings and decisions have changed about writing" and "Writing serious, informative books turned into a comedy as my friend and I decided to become writers." These sounded suspiciously like cause/effect analyses to me. I read on." "Even though tests are usually hard, there are some ways to get around them. "Writing letters can be a very fun way to communicate with people." Couldn't these become good illustration essays or process analyses? Nearly every student's thesis suggested a particular development, a particular mode. I explained these modes to them, and I asked them then to observe their own writings. Was one of the modes suggested there? Not one student seemed bewildered. I asked them to check their preliminary rhetorical organization with three other class members to make sure they were not mistaken or confused. I then asked them to read the text chapter appropriate to the mode in which their paper was already loosely formed, pick up some concrete organizational ideas, and come in the next time with their second draft, revised according to what they'd learned from the textbook reading. After several more revisions and much group work, students felt like experts in at least one of the rhetorical modes. Through their group work they were also familiar with several of the other modes, as the groups were organized randomly, not by certain types of writing.

When I received the final 28 papers, I discovered that I had received eight process analyses, four descriptions, five cause-effect analyses, six illustrative essays, and three comparison/contrast essays. Only two of the papers had no recognizable form. And the grades were rather good for first papers from first-semester college students. One A was given. There were seven B's, twelve C's, and eight D's, including the two with no recognizable organization. No one failed. Preliminary thesis ideas had turned into thesis statements such as "I have gone from loving to write for pure enjoyment to hating formal writing assignments, from wanting to be a writer to dreaming of being a journalist" and "Writing serious and informative books and articles turned into a hilarious experience as a friend and I decided to become professional writers" for cause/effect analyses and "Even though these essay tests in English Literature are usually difficult, sometimes they have certain advantages" and "Through my own writing experiences, I have found that writing letters to people can lead to many embarrassing moments" for organization by example and illustration.

So far so good. I had not actually assigned a writing in one of the modes, but I'd received logically organized essays written in the modes. And, as the essays were first-person narratives, they were interesting, good reading. But would this work with my more experienced, second-semester writers, and with a more difficult point of view? I decided to try.

We began again with free, non-stop writings, which would later develop into rough drafts. I asked my students to write either interior or dramatic monologues. For their first freewritings I gave them each a picture of a

person or persons involved in some kind of activity. They were to assume the personality and perspective of that person and write their interior or dramatic monologues from that person's point of view. They did several of these in class and several more on their own time, each time assuming a different character. One of these they then worked up into a rough, 500-700-word essay.

I went through the same process with these papers that I had with my first-semester students' papers and found thesis ideas which included "When I grow up I am going to be just like Superman." Process analysis? Maybe. I read, "In 20 years of marriage, dinner's been on time about a dozen times. It hasn't always been my fault." Cause/effect analysis? Process? Description? This could develop many different ways. Again, after reading these rough papers, I explained the rhetorical modes and asked the students to search their work for a developing, or developmental, form of organization. The monologues were more difficult to analyze, but after much discussion with other members of the class, much checking of the textbook, each student decided how to reorganize his or her writing, decided which mode to concentrate on, which textbook chapter or chapters to read. They came in then with revisions based on their new knowledge of form, but with papers still written as dramatic or interior monologues. They had assumed an artificial rhetorical character, or rhetorical voice, and had still been able to organize in terms of the rhetorical modes. Again, after many revisions and much group work, the final papers came in. I received, essentially, 26 descriptions, including character analyses, eight process analyses, and only one paper with no recognizable form. The grades were high. Two A's were given. There were thirteen B's, thirteen C's, six D's, and one failing grade, on the rambling, unformed paper. Vague thesis ideas had become crisp: "When I grow up I'm going to be just like Superman; I will be stronger than a charging locomotive, faster than a speeding bullet, and be able to jump large buildings in a single bound. . . .I will not be told what to do. . ." and "I'm supposed to be chef, housekeeper, seamstress, receptionist, cost accountant, nurse, and taxi driver, not to mention a loving and devoted wife. So here I am, standing in line at a grocery store like the obedient slave that I've been for half my life."

The central question of my research was answered. Yes, rhetorical form, or mode, will follow, even if we concentrate on teaching rhetorical character. To each of these classes I gave several more similar assignments, and the results were the same each time. We can, then, have both an organized form and lively content. We just have to adapt our ideas about the primary importance of form. And we need to teach writing-about-something-to-someone,[7] rather than writing writing.

Notes

1. Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance," College Composition and Communication, 14(October 1963), pp. 141-3.

2. Wendell Johnson, "You Can't Write Writing," in The Use and Misuse of Language, ed. S. I. Hayakawa (New York: Fawcett, 1962), p. 109.

3. Sharon Pianko, "A Description of the Composing Processes of College Freshman Writers," Research in the Teaching of English, 13(February 1979), 17-18.

4. Edmund Farrell, "The Beginning Begets: Making Composition Assignments," English Journal, 58(1969), 430.

5. Walker Gibson, in "The Beginning Begets," p. 430.

6. James Moffett, Active Voice (Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1981), p. 4.

7. Johnson, p. 109.

Discovering Audience/Inventing Purpose: A Case Study of Revision in a Cooperative Writing Workshop

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In this article, I will be sharing some of my observations of first-term freshmen at work in a cooperative writing workshop.[1] My students have but one assignment, one that is every genuine writer's: "What is that special something that you know but, chances are, others don't but would benefit from knowing?" In their work on three projects, students consider the class as their audience. They experiment with ideas for their projects in daily journals. Most class time is spent in small group discussions sharing journal entries, talking about projects and plans, and reviewing drafts. On occasion, each group will read another's drafts and prepare collaboratively written critiques. I introduce critical concepts and accompanying disucssion guides which raise such issues as focus, audience, purpose, expertise, support, lead, voice, and organization. I also participate in group discussions and hold conferences. My intent is to create an environment in which students actively participate in a variety of genuine writing problems as both readers and writers. Although I do not assign grades at any time during the term, I do periodically collect and respond in writing to project folders which contain a typed, edited version and all related drafts and journal work. I expect students to continue to revise their projects throughout the term. For their final assignment, they write essays which review and evaluate the contents of their writing folders. During our exam week, I hold conferences to discuss these evaluations. At that time, I assign a grade for the course.

The range of writing and the considerable and sometimes elaborate revision which have resulted have been impressive. Students' processes in the workshop setting seem better to reflect those of mature writers than those of students in traditional classrooms which teach the conventions of a particular discourse mode and subsequently assign topics. We have seen in the work of Flower and Hayes[2] that expert writers, even when they are presented with assignments which designate audience and purpose, actually create for themselves the writing problems they solve. Students in the cooperative writing workshop similarly make inferences about their audiences and these in turn help them to determine their plans and goals.

To document this process and to understand its dynamics better, I recorded all meetings of a group of five students in two of my classes, reviewed their writing folders, recorded conferences, and gathered protocols as each subject worked on three drafts of a single paper. I will here review what I learned of one student's progress and the contribution of group discussion to his process. Two of my principal questions in conducting this investigation were quite simply: 1) What goes on in the groups when I'm not there? and 2) Is what goes on when I'm not there of any value? My review of

the transcripts of discussions coupled with the analysis of student composing suggests that such talk is indeed helpful to writers in developing their sense of audience and in their subsequent planning of appropriate rhetorical strategies. Most often this understanding of audience was far more important to the writer's progress than the direct advice for revision offered by members of the group. This can be seen in Steve's work on his first project of the term.

During an early meeting Steve shared a journal entry on his experience growing up on a family farm:

> I have worked on our farm since I was a little kid. I remember when I was about 4 or 5 that was my biggest thrill was going out and helping my dad, (even though when I look back at it I know I was probably more of a nuisance than anything else). As I grew older my dad of course expected more of me. I remember I get so mad at my dad when I was about 11-12 for making me get up at 7:00 am to go to work when none of the other kids my age had to. But know I really enjoy getting up going to work all day whether It's menial labor or driving tractor. I personally can't see how someone couldn't get you to work out in the out of doors all day long sure it's tedious work and hard sometimes, But when you get done with a job like pruining and in six months you see how much good it did it makes you feel good inside.

In the ensuing discussion, the group asked about the farm, the work, its crops and acreage. They were especially impressed with the size of the farm and its business-like organization. Steve discussed wages and management structure. The group was not able to help Steve decide on just how he would approach the paper. In fact, their suggestions more often displayed their ignorance of the subject. For example, when Dan suggested that Steve might focus on his work with one particular crop, Steve explained that such an approach wouldn't really reflect his job:

> Well actually, I don't just work with cherry trees or just work with apple trees, like, you know, one week, all week I might just be mowing orchards and the next week I might be weedspraying orchards or pruning orchards. Or I might be out working with the asparagus crew and then we have peaches and strawberries and plums.

The discussion did, however, serve to give Steve a sense of his audience. All but Mitch had grown up in suburbia. Mitch shared some of his own experiences of farmwork and compared notes with Steve. He remarked, "I'd always tell people I'm working on this farm and nobody ever knows what I'm talking about." Steve agreed.

The next day, Steve wrote a draft. He described his farm, covering much of the material that had been discussed with the group. Overall, his approach was chronological, informative, and descriptive. However, his concluding paragraph showed evidence of the germ of a quite different rhetorical strategy. He wrote:

> Farming is no longer a business for a fifty year old man with

> a straw hat wearing bib overhauls. Unfortunately farming has become a business. . .that takes a tremendous amount of capital.

Steve had been thinking about his audience, and his subsequent analysis would lead to a new plan for the paper. The next day he wrote in his journal:

> Before. . .I was going to be a lot more general and just talk about the basics of farm life. But then when I had that free writing for ten minutes, I found myself feeling that people really don't understand agriculture at all. And that a lot of people think of it not as a business but a job that some stupid S.O.B. does. I've decided to be a modern day Don Quixote and set the record straight. That farming is a business that requires smarts and that it is a very modernized industry.

Having discovered his audience and his purpose, Steve went on to experiment in his journal with strategies for his paper. In the next meeting with his group, he asked their opinions on alternative approaches he'd developed. In the first version, he attempted a chronological account. He began:

> My Great Grandpa arrived in Michigan in 1882. He arrived with his wife and oldest son. They traveled from Detroit to Benzie County where they bought 120 acres. . . .

Another approach tackled the problem, as he saw it, head-on:

> For those of you who have breathed the city smog all your life or lived in suburbia somewhere this paper will totally destroy the Green Acres stereotype that you have about farmers. . . .

A third was similar to the second but here relied on imagery:

> My dad does own a suit but not only for church. He also wears them for business meetings. Now that may be hard for most of you who probably imagine my dad with a pair of bib overhauls and straw hat out driving a tractor, and not behind a desk. . . .

His last was more abstract and academic:

> American Agriculture has developed into the most modern agricultural system in the world. . . .

Steve introduced his leads by telling the group of his new purpose, "All you've got to remember is that I want to make the paper more towards how farming has gone from, meaning the stereotype to modern industry." Although he was hoping that the group would help him decide which was best, he found that they couldn't agree. Then Dan suggested that he might combine his last lead with the second. Steve tried it. Dan then added a sentence from the third version. David then offered an alternative combination.

When Steve went on to work on subsequent drafts, he soon rejected the awkward combinations suggested by the group. However, he had learned that different elements had appealed to his readers. They saw that he had a general point to make but were most persuaded by specific examples from his experience. They discouraged Steve from using the chronological approach that he had first attempted. For his final draft, Steve did incorporate elements of the earlier versions as well as develop a comparison/contrast approach that he'd implied in his first comment to the group but had not yet written. This version began:

> Those of you who have inhaled the city smog or lived in suburbia all your life don't realize that America's Agriculture is the most modern in the world. Our farming practices, strains of crops, and technology are superior to any other country's agricultural industry. The American farmer is probably unlike the way you invision him. The American farmer of today is college-educated, informed of the business world, spends more time making business decisions than actually working out in the field. He is still as hard working as ever usually working six days a week, nine to ten hours a day. Durring peak times such as harvest and planting, it will increase to seven days a week, twelve to thirteen hours a day.

Steve went on to compare changes in mechanization, safety, communications, and record-keeping (his father had recently purchased a computer) over the past twenty years. While the final version was still somewhat inconsistent and unpolished, Steve had succeeded in discovering both something that he had wanted to say and an effective strategy for saying it. With the information he had gained from the group discussion and with the freedom to use this knowledge to invent his own topic, Steve had begun to learn to write, like a writer.

Notes

1. I owe much of the design and inspiration for this course to a model first developed by Dixie Gowswami and Hal Douglas at Middlesex County (NJ) College.

2. Linda Flower and J. R. Hayes, "The Cognition of Discovery," College Composition and Communication, 31(1980), 21-32.

Helping Basic Writers to Revise

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In our Writing Center classes we face the challenge of broadening our students' interpretations of revision. Certainly, we are not alone in this task. For example, in a 1980 study comparing student writers' attitudes toward revision with those of professional writers, Nancy Sommers found that students were primarily concerned with changing the vocabulary of their writing, that they perceived revision to mean nothing more than the occasional rephrasing of a word here and there. In this respect the students differed sharply from the experienced writers who, in an attempt to discover meaning, constantly shifted, re-ordered, and re-structured their writing.[1] But to basic writers in particular, revision seems to be especially threatening. For some, the process of converting thoughts to written form may be so laborious that tampering with the finished product seems out of the question. Thus they remain inflexible to change. Other basic writers become defensive about their work, viewing the need for revision as a reflection of inadequate skills; still others narrowly interpret revision to mean simply copying their first draft over in neater form. To help our basic writers understand revision and function as better critics of their own work, we have developed a module called "Practicing Revision Strategies" and have incorporated several procedures into our Writing Center classes to reinforce these practices.

Given early in the term, the module attempts both to make students aware of the frequent need for major revisions and to give them practice in making these changes. The following passage by John Kenneth Galbraith is used in the module as a springboard for discussing all writers' need to revise:

> But anyone who is not certifiably a Milton had better assume that the first draft is a very primitive thing. The reason is simple: Writing is difficult work. . . .So all first drafts are deeply flawed by the need to combine composition with thought. Each later draft is less demanding in this regard. Hence the writing can be better.[2]

The students' attention is also called to the different levels of revision--to the difference between revision as proofreading, for example, in which a writer improves the surface features of writing, and revision in the broader sense, in which a writer seeks to improve the larger rhetorical elements of a work. Since our students are generally familiar with the concept of proofreading, the module focuses on strategies for reviewing the larger rhetorical elements:

1) Revising for weak organization

2) Revising for inadequate development

3) Revising for irrelevant material

4) Revising for redundancy

5) Revising for poor word choice.

Admittedly, by so isolating specific areas for separate treatment, we obscure the recursive nature of the revision process as Sommers found it to exist among experienced writers; according to Sommers, for example, experienced writers use a series of revision strategies to treat several different objectives concurrently, although to varying degrees.[3] But for basic writers in particular, the isolation of a single area such as organization is advantageous as it enables them to explore its role more fully in any given piece of writing and then grapple with ways that the area can be improved.

The treatment of each area follows an identical pattern. Included first is a sample of expository writing containing the pertinent flaws; second, an analysis of the flaws themselves; third, a revised version of the writing; and finally, an essay that the students must revise for the same type of problems.

The process involved is illustrated in the following poorly-organized sample, the sentences of which are numbered for later identification:

Original Sample with Weak Organization

(1) The automobile industry in the United States is in a state of decline. (2) Several factors have caused this decline. (3) Very high unemployment exists among autoworkers, especially in such states as Michigan. (4) The big three corporations have also suffered heavy losses during the past few years. (5) One reason for the decline in American sales is the heavy foreign competition from such countries as Germany and Japan, which have successfully made small cars for a long time. (6) Americans are interested in small cars because of their concern with gas shortages and with the prices of gasoline. (7) Higher production costs have made the price of a new car unaffordable for many people, especially during a recession.

(8) The effects of the decline are varied and far-ranging. (9) Decreases in sales have occurred for the auto companies. (10) Chrysler Corporation, in particular, has needed to be subsidized by the federal government. (11) These effects are also noticeable among the automobile suppliers, who have, in turn, experienced a decline in sales. (12) In order to curb this decline, the government may have to limit the number of imports. (13) Furthermore, American automakers will have to improve the gas mileage on the cars they design.

This sample is followed by an analysis of why the existing organization is weak, what the writer is trying to accomplish, and which organization method would best work to achieve this goal. Through this analysis students are made to consider the relationship among ideas that good organization conveys, and they are reminded of the choices that each writer faces in structuring a paper. In the revised version that follows, not only is the original pattern totally re-structured, but new information is also added, thereby showing students that revision can sometimes result in major changes.

Revised Sample with Improved Organization

(1) The automobile industry in the United States is in a state of decline. For example, (9) decreases in sales have occurred for all the auto companies, and (4) the big three corporations have suffered heavy losses during the past few years. (10) Chrysler Corporation, in particular, has needed to be subsidized by the federal government.

(2) Several factors have caused this decline. (5) A major reason for the drop in American car sales is the heavy foreign competition from such countries as Germany and Japan, which have successfully made small cars for a long time. (6) Americans are interested in small cars because of their concerns with gas shortages and with the cost of gasoline. (7) Finally, higher production costs have made the price of a new car unaffordable for many people, especially during a recession.

(8) The effects of the decline are varied and far-ranging. (3) Very high unemployment exists among autoworkers, especially in such states as Michigan. (11) These effects are also noticeable among the automobile suppliers, who have, in turn, experienced a decline in their sales. Thus, the overall economy is badly affected by this decline.

Some possible solutions to this problem lie with both the government and the auto industry. (12) The government may have to limit the number of auto imports and ease up on the strict regulations governing emission standards and safety. (13) The American automakers will have to improve both the gas mileage and the quality of the cars they produce to compete with foreign imports. Workers will have to accept fewer salary increases until the price spiral can stabilize. Through a combination of these means the automotive industry can perhaps be revived.

Once students have been shown how to revise for weak organization, they must practice this skill by revising a short essay. Given a suggested outline for the revised essay, students must re-organize the paper according to the topics provided for each paragraph.

The other revision skills of the module are treated in a similar manner. In order to eliminate redundancy, for example, students must revise an essay containing extensive repetition of words, phrases, or ideas. By revising such

essays, a portion of one which is noted below, students learn to distinguish between legitimate repetition for emphasis or clarity and the empty padding that can--either consciously or unconsciously--occur in their own writing.

Revising for Redundancy

> The evacuation of coastal residents during a hurricane is a major concern to the National Weather Service. Evacuation is a problem that worries them. Because of the sudden population spurt along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts during the last decade, the great majority of people have never experienced a hurricane. They are unfamiliar with hurricanes. Many of these people would refuse to evacuate their homes in case of an approaching hurricane. The director and head of the National Hurricane Center, Dr. Neil Frank, spends several months each year traveling to potentially dangerous areas. He goes to these areas to discuss and talk to residents who live there about the genuine threat which hurricanes present. He finds many people as unpredictable and erratic as the paths of hurricanes themselves.

Similarly, in revising for inadequate development, students learn that a writer cannot make unsupported generalizations. They are given an essay that includes the statement, "But despite the enormous devastations which hurricanes cause, they have some benefits, too," and students must find specific examples of benefits to develop this idea.

Since such areas as redundancy and inadequate development typically give difficulty to basic writers, the revision exercises can be especially helpful in reinforcing for students the importance of these concepts. The exercises make students consider these concepts from the different perspective of an editor before giving them additional writing practice in making the necessary corrections. Thus by giving students strategies for revising these larger concepts, we hope to make students see that revision is an integral part of the writing process.

Helping students apply these revision strategies to their own writing is the hardest task of all, and the techniques set forth in the module need constant reinforcement. One such reinforcement tool is the checklist that accompanies each of our writing assignments to guide students both in proofreading for grammar errors and in revising for the larger rhetorical areas. A partial checklist derived from an assignment on advertisements is given below:

1) Does the controlling idea contain key words that explain the type of advertisements and the dominant quality associated with them?

2) Are there sufficient examples to develop the topic?

3) Does each example contain concrete and relevant details from the picture or copy?

4) Is the connection between the details and the controlling idea made clear to the readers?

5) Is the order of the examples logical and effective?

6) Is the switch from one example to the next clearly signaled to the readers?

These checklists are further used in the individual conferences that the Writing Center instructors hold on each paper; thus students are encouraged to follow these guides in doing their own revisions.

Revision is stressed in a variety of other ways as well. Not only is at least one revision required for each paper a student submits, but revision exercises are also frequently given in class. These exercises may be anonymous sentences which are taken from student papers and which the class must edit for clarity; they may be an expository paragraph in which students are directed to revise for organization or for some other specific area; or they may be a creative story containing various types of errors for students to revise. Through this emphasis on revision, therefore, students are made to see that writing and revising are closely intertwined.

Certainly, our students' attitudes toward revision do not change drastically during the course of their work at the Writing Center, nor do their revisions become truly sophisticated; their succeeding papers continue to demonstrate a need for multiple revisions. Yet, through the structured revision module, through the conferences and revision checklists that accompany each assignment, and through occasional classroom exercises, our students become seemingly less intimidated by the idea of revising or re-seeing their work. They learn, in fact, that the possibility of change inherent in revision actually makes it easier for them to write their first drafts.

Notes

1. Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," College Composition and Communication, 31(1980), 381-3.

2. John Kenneth Galbraith, "Writing, Typing & Economics," Atlantic Monthly, March 1978, p. 103.

3. Sommers, p. 387.

4. Information for this essay has been derived with the permission of the editor from "Hurricane!" by Ben Funk, National Geographic, September 1980, pp. 378-9.

Some Strategies for Teaching Revision

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Although experienced writers recognize revision as a major component of the writing process, many students are incapable of revising their prose even when they are encouraged to do so. Thus, when given an opportunity to revise a completed essay, students will often submit a recopied, neater version of the original, with few, if any, real revisions. In order to help students improve their drafts, writing teachers must understand the complex psychological barriers which interfere with students' attempts at revision and must develop strategies for helping students overcome these barriers.

Most of the significant obstacles to an understanding of revision derive from the traditional product approach to the teaching of writing. Although, as Maxine Hairston points out, teachers in the vanguard of the profession have largely rejected the product model and have begun to teach writing as process,[1] these instructors must teach students whose conceptions of themselves as writers have been distorted by years of product-oriented instruction. This instruction has often had adverse effects on children from the beginning of their education. A second grader asked to describe the picture of a perspiring girl, for example, may write, "She looks mad," consciously rejecting a more accurate adjective such as exhausted, which requires the writer to risk a spelling error and thus a lower grade. From their earliest schooling, therefore, students absorb from their teachers an obsession for correct usage, an obsession which often stunts their natural syntactic growth and which forces them to regress to immature patterns, which are safer because less error-prone. Primer sentences are epidemic in freshman English.

The grading practices of many product-oriented writing instructors are especially inimical to an understanding of revision. When 250-word, five-paragraph themes, composed in 50 minutes on impromptu topics, are returned to the writers, they are bedecked with marginal embellishments like "awk" or "gr" or "frag"; though the writers must often correct these surface errors, rarely are they rewarded for conscientious corrections. Even the staunchest advocates of this system unwittingly concede its inadequacy in their complaints that students ignore marginal notations, that they compound their errors (changing "mispelled" to "mispeled," for example), and that they continue to make the same errors in later assignments. This apparent imperviousness to learning is actually quite predictable. Aware that the original essay--or the first draft--is the most significant, if not the exclusive determiner of a grade, students have simply adopted the instructor's view of writing as product. If alterations cannot improve the grade, the tacit assumption is that they cannot improve the essay either; it is a finished product.

One of the most insidious consequences of the product paradigm is not merely that it fails to introduce students to revision, as Donald Murray has pointed out,[2] but that it actually deters such revision. Teaching revision, therefore, often requires a sensitive but unremitting assault upon these misconceptions which prevent students from developing into more mature writers. Before undertaking revision, students must be persuaded to divert their attention from the surface features of writing. They must discover, for example, that grammatical correctness does not ensure writing competence. A useful way of encouraging this discovery is through the study of a unified, concise, correct, and complete but choppy essay, characteristics illustrated in a passage entitled "The Chicken" used by Kellogg Hunt to study syntactic maturity.[3] The selection begins, "A man lived in a farmhouse. He was old. He lived alone. The house was small. The house was on a mountain. The mountain was high. The house was on the top." Although the passage contains no errors, students so readily agree upon its poor quality that this exercise may seem superfluous until we recall having been asked to justify assigning a B or a C to essays with few grammatical errors. The analysis of passages like "The Chicken" at the outset of a writing course demonstrates that good writing demands more than correctness, allows students to recognize some of the dangers of obsession with error, and arouses students' sensitivity to new possibilities for improving their own writing. Now they are ready to study revision.

One interesting exercise which introduces students to many possibilities for revision and which results in substantially improved first drafts can be completed in four or five class periods.

Class 1. Each student is assigned a partner and is given the role of research assistant to the instructor. Each researcher interviews his or her partner and collects as much information as possible on the partner's writing experiences, attitudes, and habits.

Class 2. Students write a writer's "autobiography" about their partners. That is, each student assumes the partner's identity and writes in first person. Students consult each other for further information if they wish and then compose their "autobiographies" in class and submit them unsigned but entitled with the name of the student who is the subject of the essay.

Class 3. Students write their own writers' autobiographies and hand in unsigned but entitled with their own names.

Class 4. The class is divided into groups of four or six, partners being assigned to the same group. Each group is given all the essays by its members; thus, each group will have two essays entitled with each member's name. All of the essays are read aloud, and after the two papers about the same student are read, members of the group who did not write either paper select the one they believe is the true autobiography, giving reasons to justify their choice. (Usually their choice is correct since the true autobiography is usually more detailed and often more convincing in tone.)

Class 5. Student then revise their first essay for a grade, trying to make it more detailed and more convincing. (The revision can be completed at home.)

In addition to helping students achieve a revision that is more than a superficial correction, this exercise introduces the concept of the writing process by asking students to reflect on their attitudes toward writing and on their previous writing experiences, and it also enlarges students' awareness of choices available to writers by allowing them to see how another writer handles an identical assignment. A further benefit of this exercise is the foundation it lays for the use of peer evaluation. Here the true autobiographer says, through his or her essay, "This is how I did it." This response helps to prepare for reviewing a later essay and saying, "This is how I would do it."

If peer critiquing is to be useful in helping students revise, however, instructors must be alert to students' initial tendencies to revert to prescriptive habits when evaluating an essay. Relying on the unequivocal rules of the handbook for support of their judgments on usage, many students find surface features like punctuation or spelling safer areas for comment than larger rhetorical concerns like focus, audience, or tone. This inclination to return to surface features serves as a reminder not only of how deeply entrenched students have become in a product approach to writing but also of how important a recognition of this entrenchment is for the teaching of revision.

Students can be encouraged to develop a sensitivity for rhetorical weaknesses, however, by discussing short, mechanically perfect drafts with significant deficiencies in areas such as an awareness of audience or commitment to a purpose. Exercises like these discussions provide good illustrations of the ways writers can use drafts to explore and reassess their ideas. Student drafts make better teaching aids than professional drafts, since students, though perhaps unaware of the extent to which professionals do revise, have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that professional writers have a license denied to other writers. By examining several drafts of a short essay, students become increasingly aware of strategies available to writers like themselves for making dramatic improvements from one draft to the next. Once aware of these possibilities, students are ready to write a draft for peer review. Initially they can often profit from composing their drafts under the supervision of the instructor, who can encourage them to delay consideration of sentence-level problems until late in their composing process. This encouragement is valuable because the writer who has concentrated on larger features of the essay, unlike the writer who has labored over each sentence, will be more willing to discard portions of a draft in revision.

Peer reviewers must also be reminded to ignore grammatical errors in the first draft, but if they are directed to find two ways for improving an essay rhetorically, most students are now ready for constructive peer evaluation, especially if the instructor offers assistance. Peer critiques may actually be more helpful to the reviewers than to the writers, however, for in preparing their evaluations, the reviewers gain further experience in recognizing strategies for improving drafts, an experience that increasingly benefits their own revisions.

After developing a willingness to substantially alter their drafts,

students can profit from a study of sentence-level revisions. Five useful techniques can be derived from the observations of Frank D'Angelo and Ross Winterowd:[4]

1) Adding new material. (During vacation I visited several cities. During vacation I visited several cities--Boston, Washington, and New York.)

2) Substituting. (His parents bought a new car. His parents bought a new Mazda.)

3) Omitting unnecessary material. (In our world today, inner-city crime is a problem. Inner-city crime is a problem.)

4) Embedding. (Mary had a little lamb. Its fleece was white as snow. Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow.)

5) Rearranging. (Buy new blue Cheer if your shirts have ring around the collar. If your shirts have ring around the collar, buy new blue Cheer.)

Provided with a few examples of each technique, students can examine their own second drafts for ways of improving their sentences. Adding and Substituting are the easiest techniques to master, but the technique of omission follows logically, for as students learn to develop topics by adding and substituting, they no longer rely on the padding and verbiage that they have unwittingly been taught by the devotees of the 250-word theme. Most handbooks contain a short chapter on omission, including exercises that provide verbose sentences to be written more succinctly, and student essays provide an inexhaustible source of additional examples. The study of this technique immediately following a study of addition and substitution convincingly demonstrates that developing an essay requires expansion through new material, not new words.

As students achieve proficiency in conciseness, they may discover that their sentences are becoming more rather than less like those of Kellogg Hunt's "The Chicken." At this point they are receptive to instruction in embedding and rearranging, for which a wealth of instructional assistance is available in the work of John Mellon, Frank O'Hare, and William Strong.

Undoubtedly, one of our responsibilities as teachers is to help students master the code of correctness expected in the working world. But we must also help them develop their abilities to write vigorous, logical, and persuasive prose. Students with little exposure to a process approach to writing seem to acquire expertise in revision more quickly when instruction first focuses on the essay as a whole and then narrows gradually to matters of style and diction and only finally addresses mechanics. Revision is often learned slowly, but because it is an activity to be practiced rather than a body of material to be memorized, it will be retained while distinctions between who and whom and between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses linger only as blurred memories of the adult who, on meeting an English teacher, feels compelled to mumble defensively, "I'd better watch my grammar."

Notes

1. Maxine Hairston, "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Resolution in the Teaching of Writing," College Composition and Communication, 33 (1982), 78.

2. Donald M. Murray, "Internal Revision: A Process of Discovery," in Research on Composing: Points of Departure, ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Urbana: NCTE, 1974), p. 85.

3. Kellogg Hunt, "Early Blooming and Late Blooming Syntactic Structures," Evaluating Writing, pp. 103-4.

4. Frank D'Angelo, Process and Thought in Composition, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop, 1980), p. 336, and Ross Winterowd, ed., Contemporary Rhetoric: A Conceptual Background with Readings (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 35.

5. John Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition (Urbana: NCTE, 1969); Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing without Formal Grammar Instruction (Urbana: NCTE, 1973); and William Strong, Sentence Combining: A Composing Book (New York: Random House, 1973).

Synesthesia in Revision

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"That doesn't sound right," we often mutter to ourselves as we silently re-read an early draft. How many of us, though, have paused to consider the significance of our use of the word sound when our eyes are doing the work?

What do we mean when we mutter, "That doesn't sound right"? Sometimes we are troubled by problems in sentence structure, by word choice, by incomplete explanation or transition, or by level of formality. These concerns indicate our awareness of the connections of author, topic, purpose, and audience, connections that inexperienced writers often have trouble making. In a way, we're asking, "How will this 'sound' to a reader?" a question that implies a belief that readers hear with their eyes.

And readers do hear with their eyes when they read--or hear when they do a certain kind of reading. Speed reading probably precludes mental hearing. Most kinds of information-retrieval reading probably preclude hearing, too. But what about the "heed" reading we ask our students to do, the times we hope they'll discern the subtleties of tone, the author's attitude toward subject and reader--the times we ask them to be readers who can think, "That doesn't sound right," or "That sounds just right because the writer is trying to do X"? We are asking our students to hear with their eyes, but we don't emphasize the multiplicity of the task.

Calling students' attention to the kind of mental hearing that is possible when they read and showing them how to read (and hear) what they write might help them understand the multidimensional writing process of which revision is a constant part.

The nature of the writing process and the places of revision in that process continue to be areas of inquiry in spite of the fine research that has been done in recent years. Although speculation about the mysterious writing process may be all that is possible, we must speculate in the hope that that speculation will lead us not to prescriptive categories that limit our approaches to teaching but to observations that suggest multiple approaches to teaching revision. I'd like to suggest that oral composition emphasizes audience awareness and is a step toward the mental hearing that is a part of revising.

Most inexperienced writers misunderstand revision and equate the term with error correction. They look for misspelled words, comma splices, and sentence fragments and sometimes decombine flowing sentences because they are "too long" and must be run-ons and write comma splices because the sentences are "too

short" and therefore must be fragments. These writers also tend to read their work the way they read a text when information retrieval is the primary objective. For them, what's there is what's there. "Springfield, Missouri, is the largest city in the southwest part of the state," they read and remember that fact. "Springfield, Missouri, is a very unique place," they write and are satisfied. While Springfield's population is a matter of record, its uniqueness is not, but is a matter of experience and opinion. For the student, though, what's there is there, and the writer sees no need for adding explanations and examples in spite of a teacher's gentle question, "What makes Springfield unique?" or (on a less patient day) the teacher's insistence that the writer "be more specific." An experience with oral composition followed by self-conscious attention to reading that transcends information retrieval might help students hear with their eyes and make those students more aware of a reader's needs--and those needs are, after all, the reason the student should "be more specific."

Oral composition entered my teaching world accidentally. I knew about student success in dictating fiction or exposition to a tape recorder. I'd often asked students to read their essays aloud to see whether theirs were errors in proofreading or genuine errors, to find out whether they could hear awkward sentence structures, and to help them hear where commas and periods belonged. I had even advised some teachers to use dictation when they worked with basic writers for whom the physical act of writing was so difficult that thoughts got lost before they were recorded. I had no idea that my experience with oral composition would suggest an approach to teaching revision. I had no idea that oral composition would point to a new understanding of one of the functions of reading in the composition class.

Last fall, Paul Johnson, a tall, bearded major in computer information systems, spent hours in my office, dictating his essays to me. Paul has been blind for about four years and although he knows some Braille, he has not yet sufficiently mastered that other language to use it to compose. Paul had been dictating his essays to friends, but he had taken almost no time to revise them because he felt he was imposing on friendship. Because I thought he could produce better writing than I had seen, I asked Paul to dictate to me.

Sometimes he worked from Braille notes, sometimes he just had the plan in his head, and sometimes he wasn't sure what he wanted to say and had to find out, in the saying of it. While he spoke, I did nothing but record, resisting the occasional impulse to say, "That's not a very good sentence" or "Don't you need examples of that?" When he got stuck on a sentence construction, I said, "Let's leave it that way and come back later." When he ran out of ideas, I just let him talk, and as I took quiet notes, he relaxed and realized what he wanted to write about next. One day, as we were talking about an essay, a specific example, complete with dialogue, emerged. He began dictating again, and I recorded this:

> For example, I was sorting my wash on the floor and my roommate was on the phone and he had some wash. "Here's my white clothes." "Yeah, he can do his wash. He knows what his clothes are. He's really self-sufficient." When he got off he said the person seemed surprised that I could do it.

When I read the passage to Paul, he said, "That doesn't sound right," and realized that a reader would have little idea of what he was talking about. Paul re-composed the passage this way:

> For example, while I was sorting my wash on the floor, my roommate while talking on the phone said to me, "There are some of my white clothes to be washed." So then all I did was take the white clothes and put them in with mine. Then after he said that, he proceeded to say to the person on the phone, "Yeah! He can do his wash. He knows what his clothes are. He's really self-sufficient." After he got off the phone, he said the person seemed surprised that I could do my laundry.

Paul's second version is far from being an excellent piece of prose, but at least it makes more sense to a reader than the first version did. Paul's first version is the kind of prose that satisfies many students because they look at the sentences with their eyes and do not hear what is missing.

After Paul had composed several essays, I tried some oral composition myself and found the task was much easier than I had anticipated. I've always thought of myself as a visually oriented person, having to see a name written down to remember it and having to see what I was writing to be able to continue to compose. As I dictated, I found that I could see with my ears, I found that I was acutely aware of audience, and I found that the slowness of my scribe did not inhibit the composing process but made me pause and realize that I was about to launch into a digression.

My experiences with Paul's and my oral composing made me more aware of something I've been doing for a long time: I've been hearing with my eyes, a synesthesia that enriches my reading experience and helps me write so that I sound as much like myself as the writing situation allows.

Then I began to think that if oral composition works for Paul and me, why not for other students? Although enduring the chaos of fifteen pairs of dictating students (repeatedly during the day) might be an ordeal for the teacher, that ordeal might pay off if the babble leads to more finely tuned and compatible eyes and ears in each student. And here I hear someone ask, "But can't all of this be done with a tape recorder?" Of course, many of us have found great value in having students dictate their writing to tape recorders, but if my speculation is right, that we are thinking of audience when we mutter, "That doesn't sound right," a tape recorder doesn't go as far and isn't as effective as the presence of another person is. The presence of a scribe is a reminder of the need to write for an audience, is a constant reminder of potential readers. This kind of working together suggests a conversational situation.

Although our students rarely are brilliant conversationalists, they converse easily in most settings, and certainly, in all settings, they talk more easily than they write. For them, talk is easier than writing because they feel little responsibility for the self-editing that inhibits them when they write. For many of them, the thought often gets lost in the effort of correct transcription. In addition, in conversation the words flow more quickly than

in writing because silence makes people uncomfortable. Words used to fill a conversational silence may not be profound, but they are words hunting for meaning and, in oral composition, the same kinds of words could be as effective in the search for meaning as some of the non-stop writing we use to help find out what we are thinking. Finally, oral composition, with its suggestions of conversation, also might help students bridge the gap from their multimedia environment to what they perceive as a flat, dead medium. After all, even though conversation is hardly a multimedia event, talking to someone else certainly seems more alive to students raised in a multidimensional culture than writing does. If we can help students discover the literal and mental sound inherent in writing, then composing could become a mental multimedia event.

So the chaotic scene of oral composition is this: one student dictates to another; the scribe reads the first draft to the author; and the author makes revisions, genuine revisions and not surface corrections. For example, when Paul revised the various versions of his essays, he avoided the concerns that inhibit most inexperienced writers and concentrated on sentence structure, transitions, word choice, and explanations. Although he often indicated the places where commas and periods were needed when he dictated, when I read back to him, he concentrated on other writing matters, saving what is really proofreading and not revising until last. After all, punctuation and spelling are matters of the eye while sentence structure, transitions, and explanations are matters of the reader's mental ear. We want our students to be concerned about the conventions of standard edited English, of course, but we also want them to understand what we mean by revision. When a scribe reads a draft aloud, the author can hear that he or she didn't say what was meant. That same author, rereading a draft alone is likely to skim the text and see what he or she meant to say--unless the writer has been trained to hear the writing being done.

The ability to hear writing can begin with oral composition, but we need to help our students see the connection with reading so that they can work toward becoming mental hearers of their own writing and can make appropriate revisions. Speed and comprehension are stressed in the reading classes our students have had--and for good reason. They need to be able to gather information efficiently. But "heed" reading, the kind of activity we expect when we assign readings, is seldom directly taught, except to English majors. Our students are being deprived, and we are frustrating ourselves because one result of this gap in our students' education is their inability to comprehend what revision involves. We ask them to revise, and they make corrections.

Because advanced students and experienced writers are the ones who mutter, "That doesn't sound right," and who unconsciously sense that readers hear with their eyes, their reading experience should yield some clues to reasons and ways to help our students become heed readers. Many of these experienced writers are English majors or teachers who have been trained in close examination of literary texts. They are sensitive to the sounds in Hopkins' poetry and Hemingway's prose, and much of that sensitivity comes from mental hearing rather than from simple visual surveying or oral presentation. Most of them first heard the magic of "I caught this morning morning's minion, king-/dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding"[1] with their eyes, although later they may have read "The Windhover" aloud or heard someone read the poem aloud. They heard Hemingway's rhythms with their eyes too.

> After a while we came out of the mountains, and there were trees along both sides of the road, and a stream and ripe fields of grain, and the road went on, very white and straight ahead, and then lifted to a little rise, and off on the left was a hill with an old castle, with buildings close around it and a field of grain going right up to the walls and shifting in the wind. . . .[2]

All of them had their attention called to Hopkins' alliteration and Hemingway's accumulation of and's and the ways they created particular moods and rhythms in words that surely were written primarily to be appreciated by the hearing mind and not to be read aloud.

When we ask students to revise, one of our concerns is that they produce prose that can be appreciated by the hearing mind. We ask them to avoid primer prose by using sentence variety. If conveying information were the primary object, primer prose would be just fine because primer prose can provide data. But merely conveying information is not the primary object: communicating with an audience is. The reader has mentally to hear the message in a voice that invites agreement, negotiation, or understanding. Sentence variety keeps a hearing reader from becoming bored, cajoles a reader to participate with the writer in the thinking or the experience.

Students who see "Avoid primer prose" or "You need more sentence variety" written in the margins of their essays may not know what the teacher means and probably won't understand why they should avoid primer prose and vary sentence patterns--unless they have become aware of the mental sounds of what they read by other authors and by themselves. Those students need to be taught the kind of reading we teach English majors, not to turn them into literary scholars but to turn them into whole readers.

Teaching this kind of heed reading won't be easy. We can't walk into class one day and say, "Today I'm going to teach you to read, really read." Our students already know how to read and would let us know, in blunt language. We can be subtle, though, as we teach them to be heed readers, asking them questions that help them discover that the mind can hear and respond. Because they are used to various kinds of speed and information retrieval reading, the discovery may be slow in coming. One way to awaken them is to ask what an author "does" to them. If they read "Many young people marry so quickly that they risk failure in marriage," their reaction will be different from the reaction they have when they read about young people who "with mixed intentions and varied illusions, grope and fling themselves into marital disaster."[3] In answering the question "What did the author do to you?" many of them will say, "He made me mad," while others will say, "He made me laugh, but the first sentence was boring." Their reactions are the result of responding to tone, and they are responding to tone because the teacher has asked them to hear with their eyes.

In finding ways to alert students to this kind of mental hearing, we need to pool our collective ingenuity. Oral composition and heed reading experiences not only will yield greater audience awareness and a sensitivity to the sound of the written word that will help students understand the reasons for revision. Oral composition and heed reading also can multiply into a variety of class activities that will continue to help us understand the mysterious writing process,

the places of revision in that writing process, and the convergence of the acts of reading and writing.

Notes

1. Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Windhover," The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie, 4th ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 69.

2. Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York: Scribner, [1926] 1954), p. 93.

3. Mervyn Cadwallader, "Marriage as a Wretched Institution," in Dimensions: Essays for Composition, eds. Thomas H. Brown and Jeffrey T. Gross (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop, 1980), p. 179.

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Call for Manuscripts: 1984 Journal Issue

The focus of the 1984 journal issue of the MISSOURI ENGLISH BULLETIN will be "Poetry in the Classroom." The editors hope to provide a notable collection of articles dealing with the use and the teaching of poetry at all levels. Manuscripts from high school and junior high school English teachers, who form the largest segment of MATE membership, are particularly welcome. At the same time, articles from teachers in any discipline who use poetry in their classrooms are invited.

Articles may range in length up to 2,500 words and should comply with NCTE guidelines on non-sexist language. Endnotes should follow the MLA Style Sheet, 2nd ed. Manuscripts should be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

The deadline for submission of manuscripts for the July 1984 issue is May 20, 1984. Further details regarding the 1984 journal issue will appear in the December 1983 MISSOURI ENGLISH BULLETIN.

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